The SPELL of PROVENCE

IT WAS SEPTEMBER AND IT WAS PROVENCE

André Hallays

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The spell of Provence.

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THE SPELL SERIES

The SPELL of PROVENCE

BY

André Hallays

Author of "The Spell of Alsace," "The Spell of the Heart of France," etc.
Translated, with a foreword, by Frank Roy Fraprie, S.M., F.R.P.S.

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First Impression, July, 1923

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INTRODUCTION

The word "Provence" brings to the mind of the average reader a confused flood of recollections. Perhaps these begin with his second year of Latin when the notes to his edition of Caesar's Commentaries explain that southern Gaul, the first conquest of the Romans outside of Italy, was known as *Nostra Provincia,* Our Province, and that from this expression comes the modern name of the region. His classical knowledge may tell him that, before the Romans, the Greeks came hither and had an important trading post at what is now Marseilles. He may have a vague idea that Provence is sown with Roman monuments; that mediaeval popes reigned at Avignon, whose bridge was thronged with travelers and famed in song. He is much more likely to recollect that Provence is a land of continued sunshine with a wonderful coast, of hotels and motoring roads facing the ever-blue Mediterranean. He hopes some day to visit the azure coast and indulge in all the worldly joys which there exist from

Hyères to Nice, with Monte Carlo thrown in for good measure.

I have no doubt that whatever picture the arm-chair traveler may have of Provence, it does not in the least correspond with that drawn by Monsieur Hallays in the series of essays here translated. Undoubtedly, the writer's architectural training is such that he appreciates at their full worth the wonderful relics of Roman civilization which may so numerously be found in Provence. He is grieved and exasperated, however, at the way in which these ruins have been mishandled for commercial purposes. He makes us feel that the well-known and much advertised show places of Provence are not the things we want to see. He takes us away from the bustle and commercial spirit of the cities and leads us into the quiet spots where old-time customs still exist; where architecture is unspoiled because unknown to the traveling public; and where the wild and arid beauty of a southern clime can be enjoyed unharassed by hordes of tourists.

He shows us Provence not as a land of eternal summer, a region of palms and forced tropical plants in the gardens of pretentious hotels, but as a parched and mountainous land burnt by the sun, flayed by the scourge of the icy

mistral pouring through its mountain gaps. It is a land whose vegetation is a strange mixture of temperate and tropic trees, where shade and shelter are both grateful, and where the eye is charmed by wonderful mountain forms from every eminence. His little towns, his monasteries, his castles, are full of interest to him and to us, partly for architectural beauties, but mainly because of the romantic lives which have been lived in them. He has brought back from the past and presented to us a most interesting group of characters; they are very human; their southern blood gave them a full share of all passions; and whether they be aristocrats, cloistered nuns, or artists, he shows us the nobilities and the defects of their characters with an impartial hand.

In its protest against the destruction or restoration of ancient masterpieces of art and architecture, in its masterly suggestions rather than descriptions of landscape beauty, in its making human and alive the dead bones of the past, this book is as brilliant and as interesting as its author's other titles in this series.

Frank Roy Fraprie.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Do not seek here either a picture or a history of Provence; you will find only notes and impressions of casual strolls. I have made them during a space of ten years, and I now collect them in the hope that they may inspire some few people with a desire to know better the present appearance and the past story of the most Latin of the provinces of France.

So I must repeat the warning with which I have prefaced other collections like this one: I have passed without notice certain famous spots and magnificent monuments, because my fancy led me elsewhere, but it is not impossible that I shall return to Provence and produce a sequel to these first lazy travels.

I have scarcely spoken in this book of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin. I have endeavored, in another work (Note 1), to depict this part of Provence, which is perhaps the most delightful and the most favored in climate and in history.

ANDRÉ HALLAYS.

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THE SPELL OF PROVENCE

CHAPTER I

GRIGNAN

"Could you bring your mind to demolish that other terrace trod by the fascinating Marchioness de Sévigné, with which are united so many recollections connected with passages in her enchanting letters?"

—Scott, Introduction to "Quentin Durward."

To Monsieur X . . . who, next Sunday, will take possession of the castle of Grignan.

Monsieur,

I know neither your name nor your tastes. But since, next Monday, when you have become the owner of the château of Grignan, you might be inclined to reply to well-intentioned advisers by referring them to Article 644 of the Civil Code, according to which property is "the right to enjoy and dispose of things in the most absolute manner, provided that they be not used in a way forbidden by the laws and regulations," I anticipate this by submitting to you today the

reflections which the announcement of the auction has suggested to all those who know Grignan.

The château is not listed as a historic monument. There is therefore neither law nor regulation which forbids you to demolish its ruins. We do not fear that you will go to such an excess of vandalism. But there are two methods of destroying a château. It may be torn down. It may also be restored. In either way the same result is obtained.

The day after the sale you will find in your antechamber an army of architects ambitious to restore Grignan. They will bring you admirable plans for reërecting the ancient home of the Adhémars. Beg them to wait and—carrying with you Madame de Sévigné's letters—go to visit your new domain. Between two gusts of the mistral, listen to what the old stones will tell you. In this wonderful place they speak with incomparable eloquence.

Between Chamaret and Grignan, in the midst of the white and stony plain where the mistral bends and twists the shrubbery, you will behold, rearing up, the formidable crag; upon a platform sustained by enormous walls, shattered, gutted, but still magnificent, rise the ruins of

the château. At that instant it is impossible not to be impressed by the surprising harmony of that devastated citadel with the sterile landscape dried by northern blasts.

The primitive beauty of Grignan is feudal, grand, almost tragic. Neither the men of the Renaissance nor those of the seventeenth century desired to change the traditional location of the family home, and, faithful to the spot where their ancestors had lived and warred, they built their palace of luxury and festival upon this gigantic, bastioned, impregnable rock. But so much elegance and sumptuousness, upon this peak beaten by the gale, seemed even a little strange three hundred years ago. What would it be, if you wished today to reconstruct this theatrical paradox of splendor!

The village huddles at the foot of the fortress walls. On its principal open place stands a bronze statue of Madame de Sévigné, surmounting a fountain to which horses come to drink. It is a nice little statue for a county seat. At least it proves that the people of Grignan glory in the memories which cling to their château. Show as much piety as these worthy people, and respect these memories by not touching the monuments which call them forth more clearly and more vividly than the most beauti-

ful statues could. Memories, like birds, nest among the ruins.

When you have climbed the slope which skirts the foot of the ramparts, you will see before you two towers; they are modern, mournfully modern: here is the only trace of restoration to be found at Grignan. Study their ugliness thoroughly. There could be no more salutary warning.

The rest of the château is only a great ruin. Those who preceded you were content to protect it as best they could; they were not impelled to repair the irreparable outrages of time; they did not dream of replacing what men and the elements had annihilated. They have transmitted to you an absolutely uninhabitable building, half fallen down, roofless and windowless, but even in this state one of the most beautiful of the works of art which still exist upon the soil of France. We implore you to preserve it for us.

The old feudal fortress had disappeared in the sixteenth century. Then the Adhémars built three magnificent dwelling houses about an interior court which opened to the east. In the seventeenth century the eastern wing was built from plans by Mansart, and the southern frontage was reconstructed in a more

classic taste. Such was the palace ruined by the Revolution. The destruction was not done systematically. The edifice was not torn down; the first step was the sale of the furnishings, then the destroyers tore out the casements and removed the tiles of the roofs in order to sell them, also. This left the structures open to the rains and the winds, which did their utmost. The ceilings have fallen. Whole panels of wall have tumbled to ruin.

The appearance of these great remnants is superb and melancholy. Some of the façades still show their finely grooved pilasters. Through the sculptured mullions of the turrets we behold wrecked staircases. The low doors are surrounded with verdure. Exquisite Renaissance ornaments, delicate medallions, remain on the walls of the galleries. Grand sculptured mantels still hold to the walls. The Louis XIV façade, called the Façade of the Prelates, still remains in all its severe and naked beauty. Half abandoned garden-beds surround the displaced curbings of the fountains. The yews, which are still clipped, continue to show the design of the gardens; but, here and there, trees which have grown up haphazard bear witness to the caprice of victorious nature. Broken statues are glimpsed among the thickets.

Great marble vases, of bold and unexpected contour, still stand on their pedestals as by a miracle. The air is perfumed with jasmine, the sky is the true heaven of Provence. They quickly make us forget the barbarism of the men who outraged so many splendors. For from these ruins, endowed with eternal life, we perceive the simultaneous unfolding of all the joy of the Renaissance and all the majesty of the seventeenth century. If they are restored, there will be nothing more admirable here than the erudition of the twentieth century.

The wonder of Grignan is the immense terrace which continues, toward the south and west, the platform from which the château rises. It covers the vaulting of the church of the village of Grignan, built at the base of the cliff; it completes its design, it crowns its nave and its square belfries. A stone balustrade follows all the sinuosities of that tiled esplanade, where carriages formerly drove about. And what a horizon, from the Ventoux to the far away Ardèche hills, half visible beyond the Rhone!

All this has a rare and royal beauty. It would be pitiful to allow the architects to mar such a perfect and moving picture. But

From a 16th Century Print

CHATEAU DE GRIGNAN.

Grignan is not only the ruin of a masterpiece. Grignan is a haunted house, from which one should not drive its familiar spirit. It is the home whither maternal passion draws back and will forever draw back the soul of Madame de Sévigné. Here Madame de Sévigné lived happy hours, because she lived them by her daughter's side. Do not build a brand-new château: the frightened soul will no longer recognize the walls of Grignan; the spirit will flee away.

The tower where she had her apartment is still standing. It now has neither windows nor floors. There remains only a beautiful mantelpiece, which is said to have been carved by Puget: it is very little to satisfy the curiosity of seekers for relics. When the Revolution broke out, nothing had been changed in the arrangement and the furnishing of the two rooms which formed the apartments of the marchioness. An inventory drawn up at the death of Marshal de Muy, purchaser of the château de Grignan, thus describes the Bohemian Room, so called because of a portrait of Madame de Grignan in gypsy costume, and the Tower Room.

"From the second floor antechamber one passes into the Bohemian Room which has one

window, and in which are a bed of crimson imperial damask, ornamented with fringe; four old-style armchairs done in red and white moquette; seven chairs of the same; three paintings, two over the door representing 'Winter' and 'Spring,' the third over the mantel representing Madame de Grignan; the room is decorated with a high-warp tapestry showing human figures. . . . Thence one passes into the Tower Room, which has two windows; here are two old-style armchairs and nine chairs upholstered in moquette with a white background and red and green flowers; satin hangings with a green striped background and brocaded in great green stripes; a picture above the door representing 'Architecture' and 'Painting'; a writing table. . . ."—A *writing table!* The very one on which were written so many charming letters to Bussy and to Coulanges!

If you are seduced by the exactness of this inventory (all the furnishings of the old château are described there with the same precision), do not begin to believe that it would be a fine thing to restore faithfully the apartments of Madame de Sévigné. Nothing could be more lamentable and cold than this decoration, if we wished to replace it today. It

would be as childish to reconstruct the *writing table* of Madame de Sévigné as to make a facsimile restoration of her lost letters.

If this ruined palace seems sad and cold to you, you have only to open the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné to bring back everything, to animate everything. Whether she converses at a distance with her daughter, "Queen of Provence," or whether she writes to her friends from Grignan, she brings back to life the whole seventeenth century château.

"I can see from here your beautiful terrace built by the Adhémars and your belfry which you have adorned with a balustrade, which must produce a very fine effect: never yet was belfry seen with such a ruffle. . . ." The terrace is the thing which she likes best at Grignan. She hopes that they will repair its balustrades, since it is her daughter's only promenade. "I think incessantly of Grignan, of all of you, of your terraces, of your beautiful and triumphant view." She feels the magnificence of this immense outlook: "All your views are admirable; I am familiar with that from Mount Ventoux; I am very fond of all these amphitheatres and, like you, I am persuaded that, if heaven ever has any curiosity about our spectacles, its inhabitants will choose no other

place to see them comfortably, undeniably the most magnificent in the world."

Thanks to her letters we may be spectators of the great work of reconstruction undertaken at Grignan. The affairs of the count were in great disorder; he continually ran deeper into debt to keep to his style of living. So, when it was decided to enlarge the château, the bishop of Carcassonne, and the coadjutor bishop of Arles, the count's uncles, came to the help of their nephew. "The coadjutor," Madame de Sévigné wrote one day to her daughter, "is worth taking very good care of. The offer which you have made him to allow him to complete the building of your château is doubtless something which he will accept: what else could he do with his money? He will not be able to perceive it in his savings. . . ." They take very good care of the coadjutor, and he ends by accepting the "offer" which was made to him. But, when the work is commenced, what trouble and disorder there is in the château! The workmen deafen the guests with their noise. A deadly effluvium fills all the apartments. And nothing progresses. They build something, and then tear it down to rebuild it. Monsieur de Carcassonne seems to be little interested in advancing the work.

But Monsieur d'Arles is a terrible builder: "What a rage he has for building and unbuilding, like, as you justly say, what one sees little girls doing when they have been given a bit of canvas! . . . I do not believe there ever was another case of conduct like his, coming to turn the château of his fathers upside down and render it uninhabitable." In his excitement the prelate even demolished an old tower which formed a screen and broke, to a certain degree, the fury of the north wind. Madame de Grignan grieves and Madame de Sévigné echoes her. Then more trouble: Monsieur de Carcassonne shows less and less enthusiasm. Madame de Sévigné complains that "the feet of Monsieur de Carcassonne are crossed," and she addresses an insidious scolding to him: "Well! my dear lord, one more tiny effort, do not cross them so soon, finish your work. Behold that of Monsieur d'Arles, how great it is, how high it is, how complete it is, etc. . . ." Five years later, everything is almost finished. For, from Grignan, she writes to Coulanges: "The apartments of the prelates, of which you have only seen the salon, are furnished very suitably, and the use which we make of them is most delightful."

Madame de Sévigné depicts all the little pro-

vincial court which buzzed around the governor's lady, the gatherings, the festivals, "your great château filled with all your great family and with all the late-comers and with all the music and the pleasures which they attract thither." The house was luxurious, the cheer delicate, the company fashionable. Every day there were "two tables served at the same time, in the same room."

Madame de Sévigné did not immediately appreciate the bold beauty of the site of Grignan. She was very sensitive to the charm of a landscape. But she had a turn of imagination which made her love especially nature in the north, softer, greener, more measured and more smiling. She wrote to Madame de Grignan from Livry: "Ah! my very dear one, how I wish you might have such nights as we have here! What soft and gracious air! What coolness! What quietness! What silence! I would like to send you some of it and may the devil take your north wind!" From Pecquigny: ". . . There are terraces upon the river Somme, which makes a hundred curves through the meadows, something you do not see at Grignan." To "this devil of a Rhone, so proud, so haughty, so turbulent," which frightened her, she preferred *her* river Loire

and that "beautiful Seine" whose gracious banks are "adorned with mansions, trees, little willows, little canals which have been led out of this great river." The stunted olives and the cypresses of Grignan pleased her less than her round-bosomed woods at Les Rochers, for she loved nature as one who was a confidant of its thoughts, and nothing is less fitted for a place of dreams than this huge rock with its hard lines, unceasingly swept by the northern gales.

The climate frightened her too. She feared for the health of her daughter in "this sharp cold wind, which pierces the strongest." Her letters are full of complaints against the north wind of Grignan which raises the dust from the building operations, penetrates to the heart of the living quarters, fills the chambers with the smoke from the fireplaces. . . .

But her tastes change as the years pass. Little by little she comes to love Grignan. Her imagination enters into harmony with the lines and colors of the landscape. It is out of the question that those who suffer from rheumatism should remain life-long rebels against the witchcraft of the southern light. One day, Madame de Sévigné, who had formerly submitted with so much patience to the rains of

Brittany and had protested so strongly when one spoke to her of her damp home at Les Rochers, wrote from Grignan (November 13, 1690): "I feel a sun which can rejuvenate me by its gentle warmth."

From that period, it is not only the joy of living near her daughter which renders her stays at Grignan delightful to her. She writes to the Countess de Guitaut: "A lovely château, beautiful air, beautiful terraces, too good cheer. Madame, this life is too soft, and the days roll past too quickly, and one does not do penance." (Let us underline these words: *too good cheer.* Madame de Sévigné, extremely fond of the table, celebrated, as was proper, the partridges of Grignan "fattened on thyme, sweet marjoram, and all the herbs with which we perfume our scent bags," the fat quail "whose thighs separate from the body at the first invitation," the melons, the white and sugary figs, the muscat grapes "like grains of amber which one can crunch").

She becomes interested in the most distant past of the château where her daughter lives and where the air is so "fine." After she has finished reading, in verses by Monsieur de Calvy, dedicated to Madame de Grignan, the

Mme DE SEVIGNY

lovely adventure of the troubadour Guillaume Adhémar, who died of love for the Countess Die, she writes: "How beautiful is this Adhémar! Also, how much he is loved! His mistress ought to have been greatly afflicted to see him die as he kissed her hand; I doubt, like you, that she would have become a nun; I find this whole story very pretty. One finds your Adhémars, your Castellanes everywhere, and the place of Grignan was more important in the time of Frederick Barbarossa than in the time of Louis XIV."

She becomes resigned to the inclemencies of the climate: "We are exposed to all the winds: it is the south wind, it is the north wind, it is the devil . . . ; all our brooks are covered with ice; the Rhone, even that furious Rhone, no longer resists; our ink-wells are frozen up . . . ; we breathe nothing but snow; our mountains are charming in their excess of horror; I wish every day that I had a painter who could properly reproduce the sweep of all these frightful beauties. . . ." Twenty years earlier, she would not have spoken with so much admiration of these "frightful beauties."

It was at Grignan that she passed the last two years of her life. Then she sat a little less

often before the writing table of the Tower Room: almost all her friends were dead. Coulanges remained, and her letters to Coulanges, dated at Grignan, are among the most delightful that she composed. The answers from Coulanges are masterpieces of wit and gaiety. In this correspondence it is possible to follow the curious and amusing history of the marriage of the young Marquis de Grignan, inheritor of the name. The fortune of the house had been dissipated by the expenditures of the count; the creditors were threatening; there was but a single chance of safety, a misalliance with the daughter of a farmer-general. Monsieur de Saint-Amand, treasurer of the States of Languedoc and commissary of the stores, was prodigiously rich. His only daughter was beautiful and had a dowry, as Madame de Sévigné says, "of forty good manners," that is to say, of four hundred thousand francs. Monsieur Hubert de Montmor, intendant of Provence, handled the negotiations. The public smiled. Madame de Grignan had some scruples for a time, but Coulanges undertook to dissipate them by these unanswerable arguments: "Do it, put through your marriage; you are right and the public is wrong, and very much wrong. . . . Get out of it, as I tell you,

all the ready money that you can; for this is the precaution which one must take in such cases; the public says, and it is not wrong, that with financiers it is never safe to count on money which is to come; and the public is sure, and it is right again, that when peace is made they will be squeezed so hard that many of them will be ruined; so take all possible precautions and console yourself for a misalliance, both by the sweet relief of no longer having any creditors while you live in beautiful, grand and magnificent châteaux which owe nothing to anybody, and by the satisfaction of sometimes giving away your superfluous wealth, which seems to me to be the greatest joy of life. That, beautiful Madame, is all that I have to say to you."

We know how the adventure ended. The bishop of Carcassonne blessed the young pair. At Grignan there were magnificent festivals and garden parties. After a few months, Saint-Amand pretended that he was ridiculed, "turned off the tap," as Saint Simon said, and took his daughter back to Paris.

Joy had been short lived at Grignan. Madame de Grignan became more ill and feeble every day. Madame de Sévigné took the notion that it was a mortal illness; she charged

her friends in Paris to consult the most famous doctors; she tried all possible remedies. Then she fell ill herself, and died (Note 2). Her remains rest in the church, below the grand terrace where, so often, she had come to contemplate the "triumphant view."

So many memories—and I have here been able only to gather at random a few scraps from those letters where the name of Grignan recurs on every page—should protect the ruins against every attempt at restoration. That would be a sacrilege! That is why, Monsieur, I address to you in all confidence the request of the admirers of Madame de Sévigné. It is not possible to touch the ruins of Grignan without lacking in the respect owed to the ruins of a masterpiece and without insulting the memory of a great French writer. It is a matter of taste and piety.

Your sole duty is to preserve Grignan as it exists today. We will be profoundly grateful to you if you do so.

October 24, 1902.

*
* *

Grignan was sold and Grignan was not restored. I have recently revisited the ruins of

the château crowning the great rock, in the midst of the stony plain devastated by northern hurricanes; I have seen again the half-ruined façades, the low doors surrounded with verdure, the exquisite Renaissance ornaments which decorate the old fortress of the Adhémars, the sculptured mantels which still cling to the walls, the displaced curbings of the fountains, the broken statues lying at the foot of the yews, the great vases of marble still standing on their pedestals, and the immense terrace with its balustrades of stone. Everything had been respected. Time and the mistral had been allowed to do their work slowly and one could pardon the revolutionary mob for having sacked a home so magnificent, in thinking that these ruins would remain ruins for centuries and centuries yet to come. But now there is another danger threatening Grignan, which could not be foreseen in 1902. It is true that the ruins are not being demolished, but they are being despoiled of all that made their splendor. The second-hand dealers want everything, the friezes, the medallions, the mantels, everything, even to the balustrades of the terrace. The marble vases of such bold and unexpected contour have already been sold to antique dealers. Like that beautiful châ-

teau of Montal, whose precious sculptures have been torn away and dispersed by antiquaries, Grignan is going to be stripped and all that remains of its decoration will wander into museums of sculpture or private collections. A man of taste is now endeavoring to reconstruct Montal at tremendous expense. We cannot even hope that some day some one will be found to re-collect the waifs of Grignan. One does not reconstruct a ruin, and Grignan is only a ruin!

There might have been a way to prevent this pitiful mischance. It would have sufficed if the state had classified Grignan as a historic monument. The owner would no doubt have protested. But, we will not cease to repeat it, the law permits taking by right of eminent domain. The law should be used. In 1902 the château was sold for twenty thousand francs; it was a laughable price, when we think of the value of the sculptures alone. And it is not only these few works of art, however precious they may be, that France has the duty of protecting—the site of Grignan is incomparably picturesque; finally, it was to Grignan that maternal passion led Madame de Sévigné so many times, and this memory alone ought to suffice to make the ruin of Grignan a "historic monument,"

if devotion to the glories of French literature was not esteemed today as the most ridiculous of manias.

May 7, 1909.

CHAPTER II

A TRIP DOWN THE RHONE—ORANGE

WHEN, several months ago, the municipality of Orange showed an intention of "completely restoring" the antique theatre, and sought from the government permission to organize a lottery for this purpose, Monsieur Gabriel Boissy opposed this project in the *Mercure de France*. I supported the protests of Monsieur Boissy and added that in my belief the theatre of Orange would be in danger until architects and comedians had been forbidden to enter it.

Some one then wrote me: "How apparent it is that you have never been present at the celebrations in Orange! If, only once, you had enjoyed the beauty of this spectacle, unmatched in the whole world, if you had beheld the amphitheatre filled with an attentive and quivering multitude, had seen the back wall of the stage rising immense and sombre under the starry sky of Provence, if you had heard the cries of the tragedians and the sobs of the

actresses re-echoed by this mass of stone, you might have less disdain for the beautiful solemnities which once in every year restore a little life to these admirable ruins, and you would be willing that the parts of the monument destined for public use should be completely restored. . . ."

My correspondent was not absolutely wrong. I had long been familiar with the theatre of Orange; I had even seen it in the condition in which the first restoration by Caristie had left it, before it had been used for performances of tragedy; but I had not assisted at one of these "solemnities." That I might no longer merit this reproach of ignorance, I went to Orange, where three performances were to be given this year . . . ; and I went to learn.

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We leave the express at Valence. We cross the awakening town. We linger an instant in the fruit market, glance at the magnificent cathedral, notice a few statues (Valence abounds in statues), and gather upon the Rhone quay. Here we must take passage on one of the cargo boats which ply between Lyons and Avignon.

While awaiting the arrival of the steamer

which left the port of Saint-Vallier in the morning, we enjoy the beauty of one of the most glorious landscapes of the Rhone. Before us, the rocks and ruins of Crussol are silhouetted against the blazing light of a dog day. Between the arches of the great stone bridge which has just been built to replace the former suspension bridge, we behold the big curve which the river describes before reaching Valence, and the light, the luminous, the exquisite picture made by the turbulent course of the great river, the delicate verdure of the poplars and the alders and, at the limit of vision, a line of hills drawn in lilac tints.

As the boat is a little late, we amuse ourselves by discussing the various merits of the three statues which contribute to the adornment of Valence: these are figures of Bancel, "representative of the people," Louis Gallet, and Émile Augier.

Which is the most ridiculous of the three? One of us votes for Bancel, who adorns the square before the railway station. Facing the town, this frightful man who brandishes a cane and a soft hat seems to desire to speak to the people; but he is unable, for there is too much wind. When we behold his mantle lifted and twisted by terrible gusts, we perceive that Ban-

cel alone can hear the heroic words which pass his lips: he gesticulates in vain in the hurricane.

"Doubtless this statue is comical," replies another; "but it is not totally lacking in utility; it is a sort of allegory for the benefit of travelers coming from the North. When they emerge from the station this monument seems to say to them: 'Those of you who do not know your geography very well, learn herewith that you are now in the South. You have perhaps not noticed the first olive trees from the window of your railway carriage. Therefore, consider the more than Berninesque folds of this mantle: here blows the mistral. Behold Bancel: this man of Valence announces to you that the sun of Provence is not far away.

'Beù souleù de la Prouvençò,
Gai compaire daù mistrau.

Glorious sun of Provence,
Gay compeer of the mistral.'"

"Very well! But what utility do you discover in the monument of Louis Gallet, which we have just seen under the trees of the esplanade? Those of us who are not from Valence know nothing of Bancel. But we do

know Gallet! And what a strange idea it is to have cut the head of this worthy librettist on a high stone pillar, at the foot of which a female faun, seated on a mound of rocks, breathes into her pipes! His great moustached head has been slightly inclined away from the faun, doubtless to signify that Gallet had a marble heart. . . ."

"Indeed!" replied the advocate of the statues, "these lyrical affairs of fauns are quite pleasing when we remember what kind of a 'poet' Gallet was. But we must at least admit that this monument is modest and that it hovers beneath the sheltering foliage of the promenade. . . . Besides, we must be just and not rally the provincials. Bancel would not be out of place on one of our exterior boulevards, nor Gallet in our Luxembourg. . . ."

But Émile Augier! Émile Augier! How will you defend that frightful pile of stone and bronze, that monstrous pedestal which, as it is too vast for the statue of the dramatist alone, supports as well an enormous tablet, and of such a style! And its allegories, those abominable allegories which sprout from the four faces of the monument? No! Even in Paris we have nothing like it. And what a revolting disproportion there is between the glory of

such a writer as Émile Augier, and this enormous contraption placed in the greatest public square of a town like Valence!"

The defender of the statues made no response to this. . . . Besides, at the same moment, a whistle blew beyond the bridge of Valence. The steamboat beat the Rhone to foam with its paddle wheels. Bending over the long tiller arm, the crew foiled the terrible violence of the current, and the long, narrow iron vessel gently touched the landing stage.

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There is nothing in France more magnificent and more varied than this descent of the Rhone. On either bank, both the side of the *Empire* and the side of the *Kingdom,* in the words which the boatmen still use, there unfolds a series of incomparable pictures between which the great river spreads its rapid and majestic waters. The distant hills approach and recede in harmonious alternation. . . . The deepest emotion provoked by this excursion is when, at each bend of the river, we suddenly see nature change, the light become more limpid, more brilliant, and more subtle. We feel our-

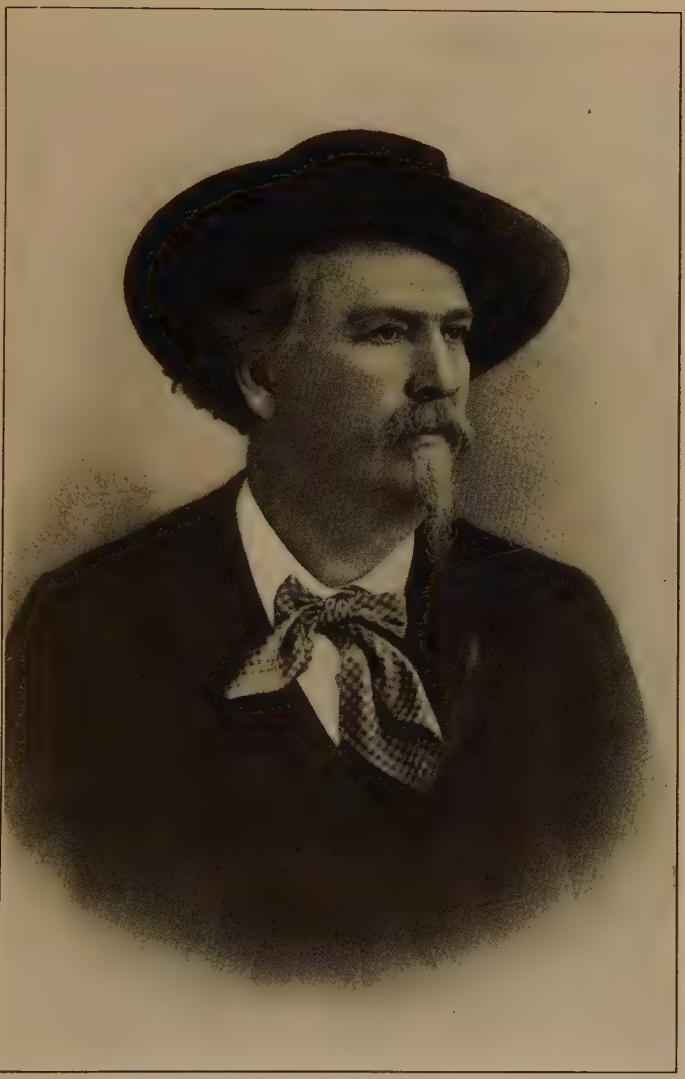
selves borne toward the land of joy and brightness.

* * *

A very great poet has produced such a beautiful and finished picture of this descent of the Rhone that no one henceforth may without rashness attempt to draw similar pictures. The *Poème du Rhône* is one of the masterpieces, possibly the masterpiece, of Frédéric Mistral.

The first steamboats have just appeared upon the river; but a flotilla of barks which navigate in the old way still transports merchandise and passengers from Lyons to Beaucaire; it has embarked cargoes of silk, leather, and hemp, and has taken aboard merchants, brokers, singers, who are bound for the great fair on business or pleasure. The life of the river, the life of the boatmen, the life of the passengers form the picturesque part of the poem.

These descriptions of manners and of landscapes are strung on the thread of a charming fable. A blonde young man, the prince of Orange, elder son of the king of Holland, has taken passage on the boat of Master Apian;



FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL.

some say that he has left his native land after a quarrel with his father; others, that he has come at the order of his physicians "to drink in the reviving rays of a bright sun,—to drink the living breath of the rough mistral." As a matter of fact, he has left the court for weariness of its intrigues and ceremonial. "And there has grown up in his mind a desire for love, the madness of an imaginative and dreaming prince; it has occurred to him that he may discover on his travels the birth of some ancient naiad, and the water lily blooming upon the wave where the nude nymph conceals herself, the beautiful and pure and clear and vague nymph whom the mind conceives and desires, whom the brush traces, whom the poet in his visions eternally evokes, the seductive, voluptuous nymph who lets her loose hair float around the swimmer in the current of the stream and melts into and becomes part of the wave. And from canal to canal he descends from his country of Flanders, along the Saône, as the swans descend from the misty north to the 'clear waters' of Vacarès, when autumn comes."

(I am obliged to use here the French translation published by Mistral himself opposite the Provençal text, a translation which is a

little loose, a little vague, and which only imperfectly renders the nervous strength of the original. I would like at least to give you the desire to go to this original: thanks to the French version which accompanies it, it is understandable by any one who is willing to pay for an exquisite enjoyment with a slight effort.)

How, after departing to seek for the ancient naiad, the prince of Orange encounters on the bank of the Rhone a pretty girl "with eyes like a partridge," Anglora; how she recognizes in the prince the dragon by whom she was loved one evening in the waters of the river; how Anglora and the prince perish in the storm, which, as they ascend the river, shatters the barks against the piles of the bridge of Saint-Esprit, is one of the most charming tales which Mistral has ever related. He has mingled in it a little of that fantastic spirit which is so common with him, and which is so pleasing to Provençal imaginations; for it is neither obscure nor mysterious: it is a simple veil of poetry whose transparency leaves all the beauty to the lines and the shadings of reality.

I re-read *Le Poème du Rhône;* I compare the verses of Mistral with the places I have just passed, with the impressions I have just felt. What accuracy in the descriptions, and what a

Virgilian sobriety! How true it is, this picture of the "solitudes" of the Rhone!

"In the bed of the Rhone, thickset with islands, the sun throws its warm radiance upon the little whirlpools which shine as they revolve and lose themselves in each other as they boil up, and upon the thickets where rise the white poplars, with their high naked trunks, white, round and polished, as if they were the thighs of some gigantic nymph or goddess. Verdant turf stretches between the osier-beds and the river; warblers innumerable utter their strident cries in the reed beds. . . . Like shining plates of steel, the long and gloomy waves lull us to sleep, almost to intoxication."

It seems to me that even a translation does not deprive this picture of the bridge of Saint-Esprit of all its grandeur:

"The arches of the bridge of Saint-Esprit, prodigies of architecture, pass triumphantly above their heads. Provence appears, for its gateway is the bridge of Saint-Esprit with its piles and its twenty proud arches, which curve like a crown across the Rhone. It is the holy gate, the gate of triumph of the land of love. The olive tree, the pomegranate in the pride of its flowering, and the millet with its great bearded heads, already adorn the slopes of the

hills and the marshy flats. The plain expands before us; the copses are green in the clear light, the heavens have the glory of Paradise. . . ."

And when a man has seen from the Rhone, were it only once, the rocks and the towers of Avignon illuminated by the setting sun, he will never again be able to separate in his memory this marvelous vision from the words of Mistral, saluting the city of the popes:

"It is Avignon and the palace of the popes! Avignon! Avignon on its giant crag! Avignon, the chimer of joy, who lifts, one beyond the other, the points of her belfries, all sparkling with gems; Avignon, the godchild of St. Peter, who has seen his bark at anchor in her harbor and who carries his keys in her crenelated girdle; Avignon, the complaisant town, whose tresses the mistral smoothes and tangles at will, and who, because she has seen glory adorn her so, retains only disdain for it! Every arm is lifted in admiration; and the crew and passengers admire Babylon (as the jealous Italians name her)."

When, having landed in "Babylon" (how the Italians had reason to be jealous of her!), I wandered about in the streets of this extraordinary town, I said again to myself that no one

VILLENEUVE-LÈS-AVIGNON.

could understand the genius of Mistral who does not passionately love Provence. For this genius owes everything to his native land: his imagination, his art, his nobility of soul, his ingeniousness. And he recognized it himself, on the day when he made the sacrifice to his fatherland of putting aside the universal glory which would have come to him had he written in French.

* * *

After I had walked out to Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, I perceived that they had just reconstructed the battlements of one of the towers of Fort Saint-André. This new crenelation is ill-conceived and useless. It will be many years before the new stones assume the color of the ancient masonry. The tower will be neither more nor less solid, whether or not it bears these battlements. What is the use of this expense? Who dreams of besieging Fort Saint-André?

Doubtless the architect said to himself that, since the towers of the palace of the popes had been recrenelated, it would be very nice to recrenelate those of Fort Saint-André. The madness of restorers is a contagious disease.

I entered the circuit of the fortress, and

there I perceived with stupefaction a brand new house, cubic in form, with blue shutters and a roof bristling with crenelations. I questioned the attendant and asked him who was the author of this strange fancy. I learned that the architect of the department of historic monuments had caused the erection of this crenelated house.

"The same who has recrenelated the tower?"

"The same."

A few minutes later I wandered through the ruins of the Chartreuse du Val de Bénédiction, below the fort. As I passed by the chapel of Innocent VI, where certain curious paintings of the fourteenth century are preserved (it is the only part of the Chartreuse which is registered as a historic monument), I lifted my head: the roof of the chapel bore a crown of new crenelations. This is what one might call *acute crenelity.*

Oh, who will be the minister of fine arts who will impose on the office of historic monuments a regulation in these words? "Architects charged with restoring churches or fortresses are forbidden to reconstruct capitals or crenelations." You would thus cut in half the budget for historic monuments and with the sums thus saved it would be possible to

strengthen the walls of the churches and the old castles, which, it will be admitted, is more urgent than to fortify them against future sieges.

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How many things one learns when traveling on the way—with a few detours—to the theatrical performances at Orange!

A few months ago the report was spread that the engineers of the department of roads and bridges proposed to "equalize the flow" of the fountain of Vaucluse, for the benefit of the manufacturers of the Sorgue valley. As it was possible to imagine that these projected works might be detrimental to the celebrated landscape which is consecrated by the memory of Petrarch, the associations which concern themselves with the protection of famous places took action. They were reassured by the statement that it was merely a question of equalizing the level with that of a subterranean pool of water very distant from the spring, and that the supply pipes would be invisible; it was added, to calm our uneasiness, that considerable sums were necessary to complete this great operation and that the state had no desire to furnish them to its engineers.

I have just passed an evening at Vaucluse; I considered the immense rock which overshadows the fountain, and I was overjoyed to know that this superb site which the barbarism of manufacturers had already disfigured, has been preserved against new attacks. But a "well informed" friend then told me the following story.

While the engineers were meditating remote, chimerical, and possibly inoffensive projects, the municipality of Vaucluse was planning an enterprise much more dangerous for the beauty of the spot. It wishes to build, on the edge of the torrent, scarcely fifty yards from the fountain, a building in which a pump will be installed. By means of enormous cast-iron pipes laid on the slope of the mountainside, this water will be elevated to an enormous concrete reservoir, built in the midst of the rocks.

For what purpose? Here the story becomes delightful. The commune of Vaucluse desires to furnish drinking water: first, to its citizens; second, to some neighboring communes. One might be astonished that the commune of Vaucluse is rich enough to undertake such important works. But it is not at its own expense that it intends to construct the buildings, the turbines, the pipes, and the reservoir. As the

VAUCLUSE.

supply of drinking water for the people of Vaucluse and their neighbors is a work of charity, the commune demands the assignment of a proportion of the funds received from the official *pari mutuel* betting at the authorized race meets.

It is necessary to add that the commune will distribute the water from its reservoir during the daytime, but at night it intends to use it to produce power. It will thus establish itself as a seller of water and a seller of electricity.

The profits derived from the *pari mutuel* betting are a political treasure house into which one sometimes dips on the most singular pretexts. But it is alleged that the commune of Vaucluse has passed the limit of impudence tolerated in this sort of business. So I imagine that the societies which were alarmed at the project of the engineers will have little difficulty in sidetracking that of the municipality of Vaucluse.

It would be pleasant if the state should sanction the destruction of landscapes at the moment when the Chambers have just voted a law to protect them (Note 3).

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From Avignon I return toward Orange.

It is twilight when I enter the square from which the enormous wall of the ancient theatre rises. Today I receive again the same impression that I felt long, long ago, when I first visited Orange, stupefying, overwhelming.

The swiftly-falling night lends an unparalleled majesty to these piled-up blocks, amplifies the proportions of the monument, adds to the tragic force of this unornamented, unfenestrated wall. Nothing could more grandly demonstrate the genius of Rome. Neither the arches worked into the masonry, nor the cornices, nor the lines of corbels, take from this architecture its military aspect. The Middle Ages were able to make the bastion of a fortress from the old wall without changing it at all.

But it is impossible to linger long over the contemplation of this admirable building. Peddlers scream: "Get your programme with the official list of players and photographs of the artists!" Others offer little cushions to those who are afraid of the coolness of the stone steps. . . . Automobiles grunt, toot, and worm through the thickest of the crowd. The Arausians, as the inhabitants of Orange are called,

crowd up to peer into the carriages which bring the actors and actresses, already dressed. The tragedians disappear into a hideous barrack of plank, built at the foot of the façade. . . . Cries, tumult, and masquerade.

We enter the theatre by a narrow doorway; we pass under foliage scarcely penetrated by the glimmer of a few lamps; we divine in the darkness the semicircle already swarming with spectators, and we find our places under the guidance of courteous gendarmes. Then, turning about, we suddenly discover the grandest and strangest of spectacles. Under the starry heaven, between the slope crowned by the crumbling walls of the château of the princes of Orange and the back wall of the stage, stretches the amphitheatre, from which mounts the confused hum of the multitude. A spotlight, temporarily turned toward the audience, illuminates the coming and going of the spectators. Behind a double row of fig trees and potted shrubs we behold the wall of the back-scene with its niches, its breaches, its ruined colonnades. The accidental light of the acetylene lamps brings out in relief the remnants of the facing and emphasizes dark cavities here and there. Curious shadows are projected upon the blocks which crown the top of the monument. It is

an extraordinary sight, from which one is suddenly brought back by hearing the three blows struck upon the stage floor, just as at the Comédie Française. At the same time, an orchestra half concealed in the trees plays an overture, and its feeble efforts sound like a music box, thin and distant in this gigantic structure.

Now the spotlight has been turned about, leaving the attentive and silent crowd in darkness; all its brilliance is now cast upon the ruins, outlining with greater sharpness zones of light and spots of shadow, and making the picture even more fantastic. It is admirable . . . like admirable scene-painting, for, when the first surprise has passed, we experience a sort of reflex illusion: we no longer believe in the reality of the monument; the artifice of illumination gives to stones and foliage the appearance of canvas and cardboard. We have before our eyes a masterpiece of Jusseaume.

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Meanwhile the tragedy has commenced. The actors have begun to recite alexandrines. Intensified by the wall, the human voice assumes incredible strength and clearness—neither

confusion nor hardness; each voice preserves its own tonality and accent. Let us observe that this phenomenon is a pure effect of chance and that it would be overbold to attribute its merit to the ancient architects. The theatre of ancient times with its veneering of marble, its colonnades, and its carvings, presented quite different acoustic conditions, and, in addition, the acoustics were of little concern to the planners of a stage which was intended for processions, pantomimes, and acrobatic feats.

We do not lose a single syllable of the verses, which are declaimed, a terrible test for the poets as well as for the comedians, and one from which modern architects in our theatres have involuntarily been wise enough to save both. Unhappily, the optics here are as detestable as the acoustics are perfect. The actors look like pygmies at the base of this cyclopean wall. It is in vain that they have been placed on a raised platform in the midst of the ancient stage; in vain they stamp their feet upon the resounding floor to express in turn despair and intrepidity; in vain they incessantly lift their arms above their heads to increase their stature. The disproportion is too great; every theatrical illusion becomes impossible.

The contrast is even more painful, because

the actors of the drama belong to antique legend. The play is an imitation of Euripides' "Hecuba"; our imagination is keyed up to heroes of superhuman stature; we behold poor little marionnettes gesticulating and screaming.

Hence everything which produces prestige in a theatrical representation disappears: the play of countenances, the charm of attitudes, the variety of tableaux. There is no semblance of reality, nor any emotion. We have returned to ourselves; we belong to ourselves, and we become sensitive to all the imperfections, all the discordances, all the puerilities of the spectacle. These wooden platforms are out of place in the midst of a structure of stone; the potted plants with which they have been decorated make them resemble the platform of a high school graduation; the trees planted on both sides of the stage form groups of grievous symmetry; the little painted wings placed on the court side and the garden side harmonize badly with the other entrances of natural foliage; the painted curtain which hangs in the frame of the central door does not harmonize with the tone of the ruins; the few accessories scattered over the immensity of the stage look as if they had been forgotten there by a careless scene-shifter. Then the tirades of the tra-

gedians are punctuated by the most unexpected sounds: an auto horn, a locomotive whistle, the popping of a lemonade bottle, the yawping of a peddler outside the enclosure who continues to sell his programmes. . . . But what exasperates us and obsesses us above all is the immutable aspect of the wall. Without doubt it is sublime and mysterious; but it is sublime in the same way for the whole evening, and a mystery which is prolonged for more than four hours becomes wearisome. No shadow moves, no light spot trembles upon the old stones. And so we soon regret the absence of the electrician, the admirable electrician of the Opéra Comique, who gives life to the canvases of Monsieur Jusseaume by the witchcraft of his well-thought-out lighting schemes.

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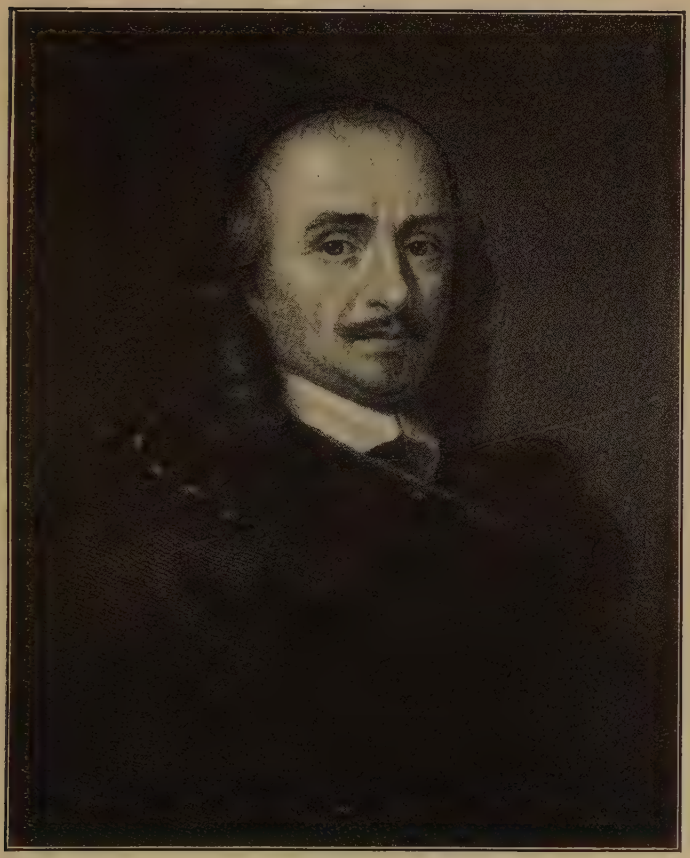
After "Hecuba" they put on "Polyeucte." Some resounding verses, made even more magnificent by the extraordinary resonance of the theatre, awakened the enthusiasm of the crowd. But what a strange figure is cut by our classic tragedy in the open air, at the foot of a ruined wall! What unjust cruelty thus to transplant masterpieces! The actors of the Comédie

Française, who usually play in "Polyeucte," had come to Orange. How much better they represent Corneille's tragedy in its natural surroundings! The elegances of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the dialectic virtuosities of the Norman lawyer, the courteous conventions and delicate shades of speech of the seventeenth century, all these become here no more than odious wordiness. The open air does not agree with countenances on which time has left its touch.

On the next day the performance commenced with Albert Samain's "Polyphème." Once more we admired the wonderful acoustic properties of the theatre, which enabled every hearer to catch the sharp and childish voice of the actress who was cast for Galatea; and this performance gave us a desire soon to see Samain's delicious idyll again on a stage where it would not be crushed by the wall, the eternal wall. In listening to "Horace" the public seemed, as on the evening before, to be especially pleased by the oratorical magnificence of the tragedy, but, in spite of several artifices of stagecraft which would have appalled Corneille, it must be admitted that the unmeasured grandeur of the monument dwarfed the actors and slowed up the action of this drama, so fer-



PIERRE CORNEILLE.

tile in ingenious twists and turns and in beautiful theatrical expedients.

Some one to whom I expressed my disappointment replied that "Horace" was a Roman tragedy, that every one accorded to Corneille the glory of having revitalized the Roman spirit, that the theatre of Orange was a Roman theatre, and that consequently the theatre of Orange was perfectly suitable for a performance of Corneille's "Horace."

A Roman theatre? This ruin lighted by acetylene! As if the Roman imagination could have even conceived the idea of a performance at night! As if the Roman genius, idolizing strength and solidity, could have conceived that any one should find the slightest beauty in displaced stones and crumbling walls! As if this theatre of Orange had ever been anything else than a gigantic Folies Bergère for the delectation of the veterans of the Second Legion! As if there were one trait in common between the primitive Roman delineated by Corneille and the "provincial" Rome of the second century!

Besides, while some people discover "the Roman soul" through beholding a performance of "Horace," others discover "the Greek soul" by seeing tragedies adapted from Sophocles or Euripides. During the eighteen years

that these "artistic solemnities" have been perpetrated, how much lyric verse and prose have we read upon this theme?

To tell the truth, this theatre is no more Greek than it is Latin. During the two days that I sat face to face with this ravaged, breached, burnt wall, I could not perceive the most distant relation between Hellenic art and this arch-romantic stage setting, for that is the word that slips out: we are here at the antipodes of Greek taste, of Latin taste, of classic French taste, in the midst of the fullest *romanticism.* This vast and half-destroyed edifice, these trees which insinuate their roots between the tumbled blocks of stone, these fantastic shadows which mount toward the summit of the monument, all form a picture which would have horrified the Greeks, the Romans, even our French ancestors. We now find in it a wild and emotional beauty. We find enjoyment in a play of imagination, which neither the ancients nor our own ancestors could appreciate; but do not let us go so far as to believe that we are reviving Rome or Greece, because we give ourselves the spectacle of a Greek or Roman carnival in a vaguely Shakespearean location. All this is merely bad taste, cheap theatricals, and bric-à-brac. . . .

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The last spectacle of the cycle was given at five o'clock on the evening of the next day. They played pieces in which modern poets had written themes on antique subjects. Perhaps, by acetylene light, the presence of Homer and of Sappho on the stage would not have been enough to hellenize the performance, but in this beautiful late afternoon, the sky of Provence gave us for a moment the illusion of Greece.

While the sunlight still vibrated on the summit of the hill, a softer brightness bathed the wall and fused its colors. Then we no longer had before us the imitated, spurious, and motionless scenery of the night performances. From second to second, as the day declined, all things were in continuous transformation, the foliage of the tufts of trees, the stones of the ruin, the toilettes of the spectators, and, when Sappho breathed her final sigh, the first shadows of the dusk, invading the theatre, imparted a strange beauty to the accents of the poet and the postures of the *tragedienne*. . . . An ineffaceable moment, a precious moment, which well repaid us for our long fatigues.

I have set down very sincerely the impressions which I received as I saw these tragedies performed in the theatre of Orange. Now, no one can reproach me again for my incompetence. Formerly, when I lifted my voice against the restoration of the monument, it was objected that I did not ascribe sufficient importance to the "admirable manifestations of art" which rendered this work necessary. I have seen them, these "manifestations of art." Frankly, they are not meritorious enough to cause the dishonor of the Roman ruin to insure their success.

The commission of historic monuments has, I know, opposed the projects of the municipality of Orange. Recently in Orange itself the eloquent voice of the Under-secretary of State for Fine Arts has proclaimed that the reconstruction of the edifice would never be resumed; but the Arausians are tenacious; things which depend upon a popular vote are full of surprises; the commission of historic monuments has more than once given us proof that the contingencies of politics can cause it to deviate from its principles; finally, neither ministers nor even secretaries of state are eternal. In short, it would be overbold to believe that the antique theatre is forever protected from res-

torations. . . . Therefore let us consider the different parts of this monument.

The superior wall of the *postscenium* and the two structures which flank the great wall have been for several years the object of various works called consolidation. Were these indispensable? Would the structure have loosened and crumbled if rebuilding the crest of the wall had been neglected? I cannot say, and I would rather admit it than incur the scornful smile of "artistic experts." In addition, it appears that there is no new restoration planned in this quarter. Up to the present moment they have not yet talked of re-erecting the colonnades, of replacing the decorations, of rebuilding the roof. They deny that they wish to reconstruct the ancient stage. They will content themselves, they say, with the platform which is used today for the productions. Unfortunately, when the "solemnities" are finished, I am not certain that they put out of sight that abominable platform which alters the appearance of the ruins.

To conceal the orchestra, the chorus, and the artists, they have multiplied the plantings on both sides of the stage and have—ridiculous conception—formed a sort of "theatre of verdure" within the antique theatre. Doubtless

they have done well in respecting the trees which had grown haphazard among the stones of the ruins, but they might have dispensed with planting new ones. If they would only thin this growing forest a little!

Arcades connect the hillside with the structures which project somewhat on both sides of the stage; these supported the lateral bays of the hemicycle, the other bays having been supported by the rock. Today they are half ruined. They have been cleared of the parasitic constructions with which the inhabitants of Orange had encumbered them since the Middle Ages; but the vaultings have fallen. Nothing could be easier than to protect these remnants with a few stays and ties. Naturally the restorers dream of restoring them too, to show the "primitive aspect" of the monument, as if the still complete arcade on the south side of the building were not a sufficient witness to enable any one to imagine the ancient aspect of the architecture. In place of rebuilding other arcades at great expense, take pains to preserve what still exists: this will be less expensive and more useful than the fabrication of "false witnesses."

What they wish, in reality, is to reconstruct the theatre or at least all parts of it used by the

public. Thus they hope to render the performances more comfortable and more remunerative. Theoretically, it is a question of consolidating a ruin. Actually, it is a question of increasing the number of seats and the amount taken in at the box office: that is the basis of the great designs of the municipality of Orange.

From the interior of the theatre one can behold in all its ugliness the accursed work of the promoters of spectacles. After the clearing out performed by the architect Caristie, there remained only five rows of seats and some of these were in very poor condition. Now almost all the degrees of the hemicycle have been reconstructed, and it was to complete this work of reconstruction that the mayor of Orange desired to organize a lottery to produce a million francs.

You may say perhaps that the evil is done, and that a few more new stones added to so many other new stones will scarcely increase the ridiculousness of this anomalous edifice, both ancient and modern, where the architects have built a pseudo-Roman hemicycle facing an authentic ruin. . . . But, without speaking of the vain expense which would be involved in the completion of this enormous and puerile en-

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terprise, the highest tiers would destroy all that remains of picturesqueness in this once admirable picture: the rocks and the shrubs which cover the hillside. Who knows if, going from restoration to restoration, they would not end by reconstructing the château of the princes of Orange, under the pretext that one could not decently leave these sordid remnants in the neighborhood of the beautiful, new, bright, and well-cut blocks of the new theatre. If, twenty years ago, for the pleasure of some theatrical people and the profit of a few innkeepers, the beauty of the theatre of Orange was delivered to the masons, this is no reason for permitting them to efface the last remnants of it.

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Arausians!—you have already been told this, but you evidently have not believed it, since your mayor has again attempted to persuade the inflexible Monsieur Dujardin-Beaumetz—imprudent Arausians! you are intent upon doing a very bad piece of business. Fashion is capricious. Some day the idlers will get tired of coming to sit upon your beautiful tiers of stone. You will announce to the crowd that Mademoiselle Dudlay herself will take the part

of Pauline, and the crowd will pay no attention. Also, from Béziers to Champigny-la-Bataille, you already have formidable competition. A few other "French Bayreuths" have been born. When, because there are no spectators, you can no longer produce spectacles, who will then dream of coming to see your "completely restored" theatre? Baedeker, the severe Baedeker, will write: "Orange formerly possessed the ruins of an antique theatre. Nothing remains of it but a fine wall which can be seen very well from the window of the railway carriage on the right after leaving Valence." And you will not even sell postal cards!

So give up once for all your Greco-Roman phantasmagorias. Leave the tragedy, the *tragediens* and the *tragediennes* on the stage of the Comédie Française: there they are in their place. As to your theatre, clear it of all the turnstiles, steps, screens and platforms with which you have cumbered it for stage productions; then beg the architects never to touch it again. It will be eternal; for only the malice of men can destroy a Roman monument.

Remember that you are the sons of this land of Provence where everything recalls the beauty that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome. To reveal both of them to us you

do not need to make theatrical speeches, gesticulations and illuminations. Merely show us the ruins with which your province is strewn. At Saint-Remy, at Cavaillon, at Carpentras, at Arles, at Orange, we will see the legions on their march, and we will imagine the amusements of the ruling people. And Greece! The grace and the splendor of your skies suffices to recall its memory from the depth of our understanding. Before going to the festival at Orange, I traveled across the Comtat. From the Chartreuse de Bonpas I beheld, across the valley of the Durance, the Alpines outlining against the sky their harmonious and delicate undulations. The lines of these hilltops presented a rhythm of such perfect elegance, the light which enveloped them was so soft and transparent, that this vision made me feel very near to Greece,—much nearer than at the moment when, on the stage before the wall, a Parisian actress recited to us in her best style the lament of Polyxena, daughter of Hecuba.

August 10–17, 1906.

CHAPTER III

ARLES

I

The Restoration of the Antiquities of Arles

ARLES lies under the threat of two scourges—archaeology and industrialism. By their work of isolating and repairing the ancient monuments, the archaeological architects are destroying the touching picture here formed by the superposition of diverse civilizations; they put under lock and key the old stones which are nothing to them but documents of restoration; thus they destroy the living beauty of the town. On the other hand, knowing that there is no place in France more visited by tourists, the venders of publicity have fastened themselves upon Arles and have literally covered its walls with their ignoble posters. Add to this the unconcern of a municipality which allows the destruction of the most precious monuments of the Middle Ages,

when it is not itself the first to dismantle them. Arles is no more than a museum; but it is the worst kept museum in Europe.

The two Cavalry Towers, which form the entrance to the town from the direction of the station, were once condemned to be torn down. They were saved, but they are spotted with posters and placards. The palace of the Podestats—municipal property—has met the same fate, and its beautiful façade is disfigured by all the venders of chocolate and saline waters. In the streets frequented by tourists there is not a wall space which is not covered with billboards.

It would seem as if private individuals and public departments were vying in their ingenuity to find means to make the town hideous. A letter box was needed in the Forum: it was deliberately fastened on the ruins of a Roman temple. Any one who has witnessed a bull fight in the Arena can testify that the tiers of steps were sufficiently vast to contain the whole population of Arles. Nevertheless the *Club Taurin* found it necessary to build along the *podium* a frightful wooden stand which disfigures the antique edifice. . . .

All this is not irremediable. Possibly some day a less barbarous municipal government will

CATHEDRAL OF ST. TROPHIME AND THE FORUM, ARLES.

suppress the posters and the placards. It would only need an order from the commission of historic monuments to secure the removal of the letter box and the grandstand of the *Club Taurin d'Arles,* since every antique monument in Arles has been listed. But how melancholy it is to stroll through the streets of the old town and to perceive at every step the traces of an irreparable disaster!

They are charming, these narrow streets which curve and twist in order to diminish the force of that enemy, the mistral. We still find there some elegant house fronts, some exquisite doors, some beautiful fragments of sculpture; but everything is uncared for, everything is crumbling to ruin and nobody cares. Most of the churches of Arles have been converted into shops or warehouses. The Grand Prieuré—municipal property—whose façade makes such a beautiful impression in the picture of Arles, as seen from the suburb of Trinquetaille, is falling to ruins. The saddest and most scandalous thing is the state in which the remnants of the Dominican convent have been left. The cloister was long ago torn down to make a place for the town water works, which they are already talking of removing to another location.

As I was trying to find my way about in the midst of the ruins of this monastery, an Arlesian approached me. He suggested that I enter his home, which was one of the offices of the old cloister, where he would show me an "old painting." I followed him into a little vaulted room where in fact one could distinguish upon the wall the well-smoked remnants of a fresco showing the town of Arles. . . . Then he led me into the church whose triple Gothic nave is open to all the winds that blow. It has been converted into stables. I could not refrain from a movement of indignation at seeing this magnificent architecture thus dishonored. "Oh, yes," said my Arlesian, "it was very unfortunate to put a stable in a place like this!" And he indulged in complaints of the barbarity of his fellow citizens. This revolt of popular taste charmed me. At last, I said to myself, I have found an inhabitant of Arles who understands the value of beauty and the dignity of remembrances! I had found a truly Florentine soul in this worthy man of Provence. Then he added simply: "And they could make such a fine *café chantant* of it!"

While the poor town of Arles is thus being transformed little by little into a mere heap of rubbish, the ancient monuments are being re-

paired, refinished, and made new with a zeal which is perhaps excessive.

They have cleared out the amphitheatre, which less than a century ago still contained a whole quarter of the town with its streets, squares and churches. I dare not say that I regret this, for fear that such a blasphemy would unleash the fury of the archaeologists upon me. But at least they might have been content with preserving the ruins of this arena. They are slowly rebuilding them, just as they were in the time of the Romans. Step by step, as this restoration progresses, the monument loses its beauty. Some day we will see an entirely new amphitheatre standing on this spot. Then they will discover that the four square towers, which have been the principal feature of the building since the Middle Ages, make an unpleasant contrast with this pile of new stone. So they will tear them down . . . but they will respect the grandstand of the *Club Taurin d'Arles.*

In the theatre, they talked at first merely of disengaging the arches of the circumvallation. Then they rebuilt a few of them. They continued to stick in a few stones here and there, and very gently, without talking too loudly about it, they are well on the road to restoration.

Of the palace of Constantine there remained only remnants which had been utilized in the construction of private houses. They commenced by acquiring the real estate nearest the Rhone, then laid bare a few sections of the wall and the vaulted apse of the palace, then restored these ruins, attempting to give them their primitive aspect. As yet they have only succeeded in giving them the appearance of a wholly new structure, for the rebuilt parts are as extensive as the original portions. The appearance of the apse is rendered most disagreeable—and possibly a little comical—by the window sashes with which they have filled the openings in order to shelter the restoration from the rain and the mistral. Are window panes and sashes really Roman? But this archaeological detail is really insignificant. The important thing is that the restoration of the apse has already cost more than forty thousand francs. And the operation is barely commenced. As the custodian of the palace said to me, "There are still more than forty houses to be condemned!" What a waste of money to bring a few old walls to light, to amuse the archaeologists and to prove the wisdom of an architect!

Although every sort of "restoration" seems

superfluous to me, I do not misconstrue the scientific interest which the study of these remains of antique architecture may have. But how can one believe that the sums necessary for such works should be taken from the appropriation for historic monuments while there are in Arles—and everywhere in France—admirable edifices on the verge of collapse for lack of a few slight repairs, which will be allowed to perish; while a whole section of a town is demolished to bring to light a few blocks of Roman masonry?

March 17, 1905.

II

The Venus of Arles

In the session of October 27, 1911, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres received an interesting communication from Monsieur Héron de Villefosse on the subject of the Venus of Arles. The learned curator of the Musée des Antiques related that a young architect, Monsieur Jules Formigé, had recently discovered at Arles a forgotten cast of the celebrated statue as it was before the restorations executed by Girardon. According to him, it was only necessary to glance at this plaster reproduction to perceive that the artist of the seventeenth century had not been content with restoring from his imagination the lost parts of the statue, but that he had recut, and lessened in size the torso and the draperies, changed the contours, and destroyed the beauty of the original work. Monsieur Frédéric Mistral protested against the conclusions of Monsieur Héron de Villefosse.

We have before us photographs of the cast

THE VENUS OF ARLES, BEFORE RESTORATION.

at Arles and the statue in the Louvre, and we are immediately tempted to recognize the justice of the contentions of Monsieur Héron de Villefosse; the marble makes a poor contrast with the plaster, and it would seem that the restorer had dishonored a genuine masterpiece of Greek sculpture of the fourth century. Nevertheless, it would perhaps be overbold to make a decision before having seen the cast itself.

Meanwhile, here are a few notes on the discovery of the Venus of Arles, its removal to Versailles, and the controversy in which the archaeologists of the seventeenth century indulged as to what goddess was represented by this statue. The story is amusing; incidentally, we will learn under what circumstances the cast rediscovered by Monsieur Jules Formigé was produced.

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On June 5, 1651, laborers, who were engaged in excavating a cistern in the courtyard of the ancient college of Arles, disinterred a marble head of a woman. The consuls, who had been informed of the discovery, and who were struck by the beauty of this sculpture, had the excava-

tions continued, and successive discoveries brought forth the torso, the draped thighs, and the feet supported on a base. It was impossible to find the arms.

The building of the former college had belonged for two years to a beneficed priest called Brun. It had been built upon the ruins of that Roman theatre of which two lovely columns still remain. At that time the archaeologists of Arles considered this structure to be a temple of Diana; consequently the figure found at this spot was at first taken for a statue of Diana. The consuls bought it from Monsieur Brun for the modest sum of sixty-one livres, and placed it in the town hall in a beautiful cupboard, made expressly for it.

Five years later, the noble François de Rebatu, councillor of the king and of the town of Arles, a personage renowned for his knowledge of antiquities, published a memoir in which he described the statue and proved that it was really a Diana. His reasons were not very weighty. He maintained, for instance, that the goddess wore on her left arm a bracelet in which one could perceive a sort of bezel; that certainly this had contained a precious stone; that this stone could be nothing else than a topaz, for the topaz is the stone of Diana,

since it waxes and wanes like the moon, and, having the power of curbing wrath and luxury, it is the emblem of chastity. He observed also that a little hole which was cut in the hair above the forehead had without any doubt served to hold a crescent.

The public of Arles asked no more, but caused the name of Diana to be engraved upon the base of the statue, happy to possess a work which so well personified the virtue of the beautiful ladies of Arles. Diana remained within her cupboard for thirty-three years and connoisseurs of art came there to visit and admire her.

She left it in 1684. The coadjutor J. B. de Grignan, who was master of his trade of courtier, convinced the consuls of Arles that they would make the king eternally their debtor if they gave him the famous statue. The first consul, Jacques de Grille, Seigneur de Roubiac et d'Estoublon, assumed the duty of traveling to Versailles. The king, enchanted with the present, presented Jacques de Grille with a chain of gold and a medallion worth more than two thousand livres; and he added these words of thanks: "Monsieur, you can assure your gentlemen of Arles that I have been much touched by the joy and eagerness which they

have shown in giving me their statue to give me pleasure. You can say to them from me that I am much obliged to them for this, and that I will do everything I can for them at every opportunity I may have." The sculptor Jean Dedieu and the commissary general of the royal troops of Provence carried the statue to Paris in the month of May, 1684.

It appears that the king did not keep his promises very well, for, three years later, the coadjutor of Arles was obliged, in order to defend his town, to recall the gift of the statue. "With what joy," he said, "had it sent the statue of *Venus* to the king when it believed that this would be pleasing! A sacrifice, nevertheless, of the dearest and most precious thing in the world to its inhabitants!"

So Diana had become Venus. How had the change occurred?

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In 1680 Monsieur Terrin, councillor of the king at the See of Arles, a much more experienced antiquary than Rebatu, had combated the opinion of the latter and proved that the precious statue was a Venus; to this end he had composed an ingenious work entitled:

Entretiens de Musée et de Callisthène sur la prétendue Diane d'Arles (Conversations of Musaeus and Callisthenes upon the Pretended Diana of Arles).

Here is the beginning of it:

"The curiosity, which Musaeus makes his chief pleasure, in regard to all which remains to us of the beauty of ancient times, had long since inspired him with the desire to have near him a statue absolutely equal to that which is preserved in the town hall at Arles, and which was found under the earth about thirty years ago. As that is of extreme beauty, and as in this art all the ancients surpassed all the moderns, a sculptor, however excellent he might be, could have made him only an unfaithful copy of this, and he could satisfy himself in this regard only by having a cast made. However, an Italian workman, who was fortunately then in the town, having been engaged to execute this, had kept his word with so much skill and fidelity that he had formed a figure of plaster not only as just and as regular as the antique, but even much more agreeable because of its whiteness and the even beauty of its material."

There can be no doubt that this was the original of the cast which Monsieur Jules Formigé

has recently discovered at Arles. It is this plaster cast, executed by an Italian workman for Monsieur Terrin, before the statue was removed to Paris, which is going to serve as a subject of conversation between the archaeologist and his friend Callisthenes.

"This figure which he had placed in the midst of his hall, had for several days been the object of admiration of all the connoisseurs; and one afternoon he himself regarded it with enchanted eyes and allowed himself to be carried away with pleasure because of the charm which the curious discover in this kind of work, when Callisthenes, one of his dearest friends, entered this place as an agreeable surprise. He was a councillor of a sovereign court of the kingdom, who had recently returned from Italy, as curious as himself in regard to statues, antique jewels and medals, a connoisseur of the best in painting, sculpture, and the finest arts, and illuminated besides with a most profound erudition. . . ."

This personage, Callisthenes, is perhaps an invention of Terrin, who endeavored in this way to impart to his archaeological considerations the more lively and diverting form of a dialogue. But the picture of these two magistrates, with mythology as their hobby, exchang-

ing learned and agreeable sentences in the cool shadow of the great hall, is rather charming: the shutters of one of the windows are half open, the light plays over the figure of the goddess, and, ravished by so much beauty, Callisthenes and Musaeus talk in the manner of two men of good taste, giving each other the reasons for their mutual belief by an exchange of remarks, memories, and texts. The tone of these learned men is perfectly friendly, and there is none of the *odium archeologicum.*

At first, they discover that they have the same scruples: they remember that "Pope Adrian VI came very near to having the Last Judgment of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel obliterated"; but other popes were less rigorous. "Besides," said Callisthenes, "we have nothing to fear from the charms of this Armida; however great they may be, the danger within them has perished with paganism and, thanks to the light of the true religion and to our own probity, we can admire them today without any fear of becoming worshippers of them."

With consciences thus at rest, they abandon themselves to the joy of admiration. Listen to Callisthenes, and note in passing certain dithyrambic expressions which we could scarcely

comprehend, if we only knew Girardon's marble, but which become clear after seeing the original cast:

"I assert to you," he continued, "that Rome contains nothing more beautiful: this nudity which can be considered as modest besides the Venus de Medicis, at first glance seduces both the eyes and the imagination; this throat so admirably chiseled; this torso contracting below these two little hillocks which are modeled and separated with such exact sense of proportion; these long and ample flanks which make the beauty and the grandeur of the figure; this belly which curves with such roundness and grace toward the left hip to give the figure that resemblance to a serpent or a flame which has been observed by all the great masters; the distinction of the muscles, almost all of which may be discovered through the feminine roundness and youthfulness of this body; the tenderness and softness of the nudity which one would take to be down or milk, to use the words of Apuleius; all this, dear Musaeus, makes an assemblage of unique beauties which could give instruction to the greatest sculptors, as the torso of the Hercules of the Belvedere did for Michelangelo."

There follows a long and charming compari-

THE VENUS DE MEDICIS.

son between the Venus of Arles and the Venus de Medicis. Callisthenes remarks that, according to Aristotle, no woman can rank as a beauty unless she is tall. The Venus of Arles is six feet high; hence the Venus de Medicis, which is of moderate stature, is less beautiful. But Musaeus replies: "The belief of Aristotle could perhaps only be followed in academies of painting, where one lays stress only on the beauty of proportions; and, to follow the opinion of another learned man, a little woman is far superior to a tall one, because of two evils, one of which may not be avoided, it is always necessary to choose the lesser." Callisthenes, beaten, does not persist, and the two interlocutors agree in recognizing that the Venus de Medicis is a "professional gallant and coquette who sets fire to all whom she approaches, and who in her entire nudity displays with overbold effrontery her most secret beauties." The Venus who is before their eyes has a grand, noble and majestic manner; her port is that of a queen and the "languor and gentle melancholy" impressed upon her countenance proves "that she feels more love than she gives."

After this long comparison they question if it be possible to consider this image as that of Diana. The nudity of the statue seems to

them contrary to the character and occupations of this goddess. The chaste Diana is generally portrayed clothed "in a sort of floating robe"; and the heavy drapery with which the sculptor has here enveloped the legs of his model would be extremely embarrassing for a huntress. "As she is naked to the waist, this cannot be a Diana, who found her greatest pleasure in hunting, modesty, and chastity." Musaeus, however, eager to be impartial or to give himself the pleasure of an exquisite quotation, remembers that there have been nude Dianas, and he translates an epigram from the Greek anthology which seems "made expressly for our statue."

"Diane où sont tes flèches et ton arc? Où est le carquois que tu portes d'ordinaire au col? Où sont tes souliers de chasse? Ton agraffe d'or? Et ta robe de pourpre relevée jusqu'aux genoux?

"Tout ce que tu viens de dire, répond la déesse, c'est mon habit de chasse; mais pour recevoir des sacrifices, je ma présente à l'encens et aux victimes de la manière que je suis."

"Where, oh Diana, are thine arrows and thy bow? Where is the quiver which thou bearest of wont upon thy shoulder, thy golden clasp, and thy robe of purple girded to the knee?

"All that you have just described," replies the goddess, "is my hunting raiment; but to receive sacrifices I present myself to the incense and to the victims in the beauty which is mine own."

And he adds, "Would you not say that the poet has seen our statue, that he has been convinced that it was Diana, that he has wished to explain her nudity, and that he has made these verses to be engraved upon the pedestal of this figure?" Nevertheless it appears no less to Callisthenes than to Musaeus that the nudity of the statue implies Venus rather than Diana.

To this first argument they add many others: the sculptor has not adorned his statue with any of the attributes of Diana; the expression of the figure, its "soft and languishing air," reveal "a heart profoundly wounded by the arrows of Love"; the bracelet which we see on the left arm was not in antiquity an adornment for a virgin; other statues of Venus which are preserved at Rome offer striking resemblances to the Venus of Arles; finally, the ruins in the midst of which the statue was found are not those of a temple, but of a theatre, and it is as natural to meet a Venus in such a place as it would be strange to find a Diana there.

As Terrin won his case long ago, it is useless to continue with these different reasons; but let us quote one more page of the "Conversations." These mythological quibblings now seem to us a bit childish, but their turn

is so agreeable and their style so elegant:

"This love of the wildwood caused her to neglect her head and her hairdressing, which are the idols of women, and she (Diana) usually let her hair fly loose. . . . In fact, when the nymphs, as Ovid tells, unclothed Diana, who desired to bathe after the hunt, one of the troop wound her loose hair into a knot. . . . And when Venus, according to Virgil, disguises herself as a huntress to talk to Aeneas, she unbinds her hair. . . .

Namque humeris de more habilem suspenderat arcum
Venatrix dederatque comam diffundere ventis.

And that caused him to take her for Diana.

"Ovid, speaking of Daphne, who imitated all the manners of Diana, does not fail to add:

Innuptaeque aemula Phoebes
Vitta coercebat positos sine lege capillos.

"Which shows that if Diana sometimes bound her hair with a ribbon, her negligence was always apparent in this, as well as in a kind of disorder which she affected and which she insisted should be practised by all the nymphs of her troop. It is thus that Claudian describes them:

Incomptae pulchraeque tamen.

And later:

Sine lege coma.

"Judge, my dear Musaeus, if a coiffure as charming as that of your figure could belong to a goddess of this disposition, and if these curled locks arranged with so much care, this double ribbon which appears to have been adorned with a precious stone, are indeed in accord with that neglected air by which she was distinguished and with that aversion which she had for all the adornments of her sex. As for myself, I am sure that neither would the goddess who had interest only in woods, coursing, and hunting, have had sufficient patience to allow herself to be thus adorned, nor would any of her nymphs have known how to do it so well.

"Let us rather recognize the mother of the Loves by this coiffure which answers so closely to that which Claudian has described for us.

"The poet Anacreon, who was no less a follower of Venus than of Bacchus, in his eulogy of this goddess, does her the greatest honor because of the charm and the beauty of her hair. And Lucian, who had so often sacrificed to Venus and to the Graces, did not fail in his book on the Loves to include, together with the

skill which these voluptuous children have in inspiring passions, their extraordinary care in curling and plaiting their locks and in preparing their headdresses. . . ."

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As Terrin was, in Provence, "the judge of all learned disputes" and as his erudition was highly esteemed by the most celebrated archaeologists, such as Vaillant, Spon, Patin, and Spanheim, his "Conversations" made a great stir. A Jesuit priest, Father Daugières, took the other side, and the poets of Arles made rhymed epigrams such as this:

Be quiet, Callisthenes, and do not dispute,
Your sentiments are far too profane,
You are wrong to seek for a Venus in Arles.
You will find but Diana, 't is plain.

The Royal Academy of Arles ranged itself unreservedly on the side of Father Daugières and, even after the statue had been sent to Versailles, continued to claim for Arles the honor of having offered a Diana and not a Venus. Hence it deputed one of its members, Monsieur Claude Charles Guyonnet de Verteron to appear before the French Academy

and demand that this body should "settle the dispute."

This Verteron was a very mediocre writer, the author of a discourse upon the "Merits of Ladies;" he had been admitted to the Academy of Arles because of the patronage of the Duc de Saint-Aignan, the founder of this society. He accepted the commission to plead the cause of Diana, and was introduced to the French Academy on August 25, 1684. The report of the proceedings states that he delivered "a discourse with his usual eloquence." But the Academy refused to take sides in the dispute of the antiquaries, as may be seen from the letter which its secretary addressed to the Duc de Saint-Aignan: "We have not believed," wrote this secretary, "that it was fitting to reply otherwise than by civilities and the usual courtesies to the proposition of the gentlemen of the Academy of Arles. You must know well that the French Academy is not required to make these decisions which are asked of it, and we are persuaded that there can be nothing to be added to that of these gentlemen, who are all extremely enlightened and persons of profound erudition. . . ."

The French Academy had all kinds of reasons for standing aside: the best was that the king

himself had just decided to judge the dispute.

Louis XIV took counsel with Le Brun and Bouchardon, caused Girardon to prepare him a little wax model of the restored antique, and decided that the statue was that of Venus. Henceforth, there was no further mention of Diana either at Arles or at Versailles. Verteron himself wrote French and Latin verses to celebrate the judgment of the king, and announced publicly that he had defended a very ridiculous opinion out of courtesy towards his fellow members at Arles, but that in the depth of his heart he had always adhered to Venus. "The august pacifier of Europe," he said, "has performed the same rôle in the sacred valley."

Colbert instructed the commissary general of the royal troops in Provence to make new excavations in the court of the house of the ancient college at Arles in the hope of discovering the arms of the statue. Thus were recovered the capitals, the fragments of columns and cornices, which are now in the lapidary museum of Arles, but the arms were not discovered and, as it would have seemed unfitting to place a mutilated sculpture at Versailles, Girardon was charged with the restoration and completion of the figure of Venus.

We know how he performed this task. He

CHARLES LE BRUN.

reconstructed the end of the nose, one of the tails of the ribbon, the right arm, the left forearm, a large portion of the drapery, the great toe of the right foot. That there might be no confusion in the future, he put in the hands of the goddess the traditional attributes of Venus, an apple and a mirror. The antique work, thus restored, was placed in the Hall of Mirrors on April 16, 1685; it stood upon an advanced pedestal at the entrance of the Hall of Battles as a pendant to another antique representing Bacchus. It remained at Versailles until the end of the eighteenth century and was then taken to the Louvre.

There it has remained. On several occasions the people of Provence have demanded that it should be returned to them, alleging that its true place is in the museum of Arles. Naturally, they have not been heeded. The days predicted by Renan when all museums will restore their stolen treasures, have not yet arrived.

While they wait, may the people of Arles keep good watch over the precious cast which the wise Monsieur Terrin had the prudence to order from an Italian workman. Otherwise it is quite possible that the plaster might one day come to rejoin the marble in Paris.

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The discovery of the cast at Arles has drawn attention to the absurdity of certain restorations. If only it might lead the public to meditate on the absurdity of *all* restorations!

The treatment to which Girardon subjected the Venus of Arles is today a cause of scandal among art lovers. This way of restoring antiques, made fashionable by the sculptors of the Italian Renaissance, appeared most natural and most legitimate to the artists of earlier days, and it is only within twoscore years that it has become common to preserve in their original state the fragments of sculpture found in excavations. Now, no one would dare to reconstruct the nose, the arms, or the drapery of a mutilated statue. However, the very people who are so severe on restorers of statues, continue to approve restorers of architecture. Why should we not accord the same respect to all the remnants of the past? We agree that it was a sacrilege to disfigure a Greek marble to make it serve for the decoration of a gallery at Versailles, and we allow architects to reconstruct the ruins of the theatres of Arles or of Orange and to quarry new steps for them, in order that tragedians of the twentieth cen-

THE VENUS OF ARLES, AFTER ITS RESTORATION BY GIRARDON.

tury may shout alexandrines of the seventeenth in a pseudo-classic stage setting.

In what respect are monuments less to be respected than statues?

November 10, 1911.

CHAPTER IV

AIX

I KNOW that I am going to draw down upon myself the wrath of the people of Marseilles. But when one returns from Aix, where, for several days, one has enjoyed the elegance and the penetrating charm of this old Provençal city, one would be truly an ingrate not to defend it against those who wish to deprive it of its last remaining glory. Aix must be left in possession of its Faculties of law and of literature. If it did not already possess them, it would be necessary to endow it with them. There is no other town which seems better fitted to shelter a university and to offer a quiet, grateful, and beautiful asylum for the student.

"This town is charming throughout, the most charming in France, after Paris," said Charles de Brosses, when he crossed Provence on his way to Italy. Since that day, "the most charming town in France" has suffered reverses. From a capital it has become a sub-

prefecture; a modest court of appeals has replaced its Parliament; the streets, which were formerly crowded by a multitude of sedan chairs decorated with gold and armorial bearings, are now deserted; there are few strollers under the trees of the courtyards; the only sound which breaks the solemn silence of the public places is that of fountains. But the external beauty of the past has not disappeared, and the superb façades of the old mansions still testify to the magnificence of former days. Today Aix is no longer the most charming city in France, for there is too much sadness in the decline of a great city; but, as it still possesses its architecture, its statues, and its books, it remains a place without an equal for comfortable reverie and leisured labor. Here we breathe the most subtle air which exists in France, for it is the air of Provence; but the very melancholy of things inclines one here to serious thought; here one may experience the exultation of full sunlight and the stinging whip of the mistral, without losing the faculty of reflection; everything here forbids the tumultuous laziness of the people of Marseilles. And this is a prime reason of intellectual hygiene for sustaining a centre for study and science at Aix.

This is not the only title of this town to the honor of which they are today seeking to deprive her.

There is a quality which must at all costs be restored to the French imagination, good taste. For years this expression has brought smiles or anger to the countenances of the Romanticists and their followers. Now we have come to recognize the disasters which this stupid derision has brought about. We are now trying to piece together the broken traditions, to restore to the nation that sense of elegance, of rhythm, of harmony, which was once the most certain and the most envied of its glories; professorships are created; societies are instituted; museums are multiplied; we place works of art before the eyes of the public to awaken in it the instinct of beauty. Lectures and lessons may be useful; museums and expositions are not without value, although there are great dangers in the abuses connected with them. But the best and the surest instruction is still that of the things among which we live. It is not unimportant to know what town will be the home of young people, at the age when their habits are formed. Now, because of the decorations of its façades, the picturesqueness of its streets, the grace of its squares, the deli-

cate harmony of its various aspects, Aix gives the students in its university an ineffaceable lesson in good taste.

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Other towns may possess more numerous and more valuable masterpieces. Not one of them is in itself such a perfect and complete work of art. Elsewhere, the centuries have left harsh contrasts as a legacy: either the old quarters which have been outgrown are no more than ruins, or the famous "exigences of modern life" have altered and diluted the character of the city of olden days. Here the inhabitants continue to dwell in the homes of their ancestors. Their fortunes have diminished, luxury has departed, but the people of Aix have preserved—whether by necessity or fidelity—their ancient homes. I have seen plans of Aix in the eighteenth century. The old palace of the counts of Provence, where the Parliament sat, was demolished at the outbreak of the Revolution; during the last century, the walls were torn down; the elms of the courts have been replaced by plane-trees; a few street names have been foolishly changed; but these are the only transformations of the town, and

Mirabeau would easily find his way about.

Upon the irregular squares, among the foliage of great trees, we see fountains everywhere, exquisite fountains whence gushes the pure and transparent water of the ancient aqueducts of Marius. Aix should be grateful for these beautiful monuments to the glory of its founders; for, without their foresight, in spite of its name, it would have died of thirst in the midst of its dry and stony surroundings.

The shaft of a Roman column erected upon a pedestal, decorated by masks and garlands, and crowned by a sphere surrounded with a branch of laurel, forms the fountain of the square of the Hôtel de Ville. Four Latin inscriptions upon it commemorate Marius who built the aqueducts, the Duc de Villars in whose time the monument was erected, the consuls who decreed its construction, and the municipality which restored it under Louis XVIII. It is delightful to decipher all these pompous things in the square where the grape market is in progress. . . .

And the sculptures and the inscriptions of the fountain on the Place des Prêcheurs! This square, which formerly formed the entrance to the palace of the counts of Provence, was the

CAIUS MARIUS.

meeting place of loafers, and the novelty fair. The singular monument which still stands there was erected in the eighteenth century. The water flows into the basin from the four corners of the fountain; at the top of the pedestal are marble plaques, inscriptions, garlands, medallions, and four lions with benevolent countenances sitting down to hold upon their backs a high stone obelisk; at the summit, an eagle with outspread wings perches on a sphere. The personages whose glory is commemorated in this place in fine inscriptional Latin are the Proconsul Sextius, Charles III of Anjou, Louis XV and the Comte de Provence, who later was Louis XVIII.

The most charming of all these fountains is that of the Four Dolphins; its grace cannot be disputed. It stands in a little crossroad which is shaded by four sweet chestnuts and which overlooks the terrace of one of the most beautiful mansions of Aix; at the end of one of the streets which enters the square rises the admirable stone steeple of the Church of St. John; in another direction we behold the shade trees of the Corso. The spot is delightful because of its quietude and its coolness, one of those places where the charm of Aix can best be enjoyed.

How charming a pretty fountain can be, and how beautiful, a fine inscription!

When we consider all the disgraceful and enormous statues with which our streets are crowded, how much we regret the time when people were content to brighten the streets by the murmur of a thread of water gushing from the mouth of a triton or a dolphin! And if it is necessary, absolutely necessary, to perpetuate our glories in marble or stone, why not follow the example of the people of Aix? Desiring to construct a monument to the painter Granet, they erected, in the midst of a basin, a column of marble found in a pagan temple, and on its capital they placed a bust of the artist. It is impossible to exceed the elegance of this votive column, and the children who come here to draw water at the fountain learn to spell the name of the artist whose memory has been celebrated.

* * *

Of the wealth once heaped up in the old mansions of Aix, the greater part has disappeared; collections of paintings have been scattered; wood carvings have been carried away; staircases have been transported into the homes of the millionaires of Paris or London. Yet not

all of the bold and majestic grand staircases have lost their admirable carvings; not all the mural paintings have been torn away; we may find delicately carved fountains in the vestibules; there are still some magnificent apartments; and, finally, the old houses have retained their façades and their charming masks.

There are vague affinities of styles between these façades. But when we study them more closely, they present a miraculous variety. The architects of Provence had an overflowing imagination. It has often been said that all these houses were built in the Italian style. It is certain that, at every step, in the streets of Aix, one is struck by reminiscences of Genoa, of Verona, of Florence, or of Rome. The delightful Renaissance house in the Rue Aude recalls the Ruccellaï Palace in Florence. The great façades by Puget, with their tall pilasters and their massive cornices, were inspired by Italy, although we recognize in them, from an indefinable vehemence and excess, the particular genius of the Provençal artist. This Italian quality, however, is less visible in the structures of the eighteenth century, as, for example, in the Hôtel de Panisse whose front has so much majesty, but also so much grace and sobriety. But the carved decoration of eight-

eenth-century Aix is eminently original, not even Provençal, but purely a product of Aix itself.

The masks placed above the windows or over the entrance doorways, as well as the frames of these doorways, show a delicate fancy in which we recognize the hand or the influence of an artist who owed nothing to Italy.

He was named Jean Pancrace Chastel. Born in Avignon in 1726, he came to Aix when he was very young and passed his whole life there. There he died in poverty in the hospice where he had been received out of charity in 1793. He married twice and had a son. That is practically all that we know of his life (Note 4).

He was not a genius and he has left no masterpieces, but Aix owes to him a part of her beauty. Although his statues and his large bas-reliefs (the Virgin, in the Madeleine at Aix; the Mausoleum of Reillane, in the museum) show a certain skillfulness in execution and an unhappy taste for the worst conventions of the period, he was a decorator of the first order. He executed the carvings of the fountain of the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, designed and decorated the fountain of the Place des Prêcheurs, carved the masks of the Halle aux Grains and the pediment of the same edi-

fice ("The Rhone" and "Cybele"), and worked on a great number of private houses. For more than forty years Chastel carved the masks on the doors and windows of the people of Aix, and planned the decorations of their staircases and their ceilings.

Aix was then under the authority of the Duc de Villars, who was the last governor of Provence. He was addle-pated and vain enough (if we did not already know this from the testimony of his contemporaries, his portrait by Latour in the museum of Aix would be enough to reveal to us his nonentity); but he prided himself on protecting the fine arts. Nobles and members of Parliament gave work to Chastel. The duke, when he died, bequeathed to Aix funds to found a school of drawing where Chastel taught. The latter then took the title of "Professor of Provincial Sculpture," and headed a school; we do not know the names of his pupils, but we can easily recognize the master's manner in all the works which they executed under his orders or following his style.

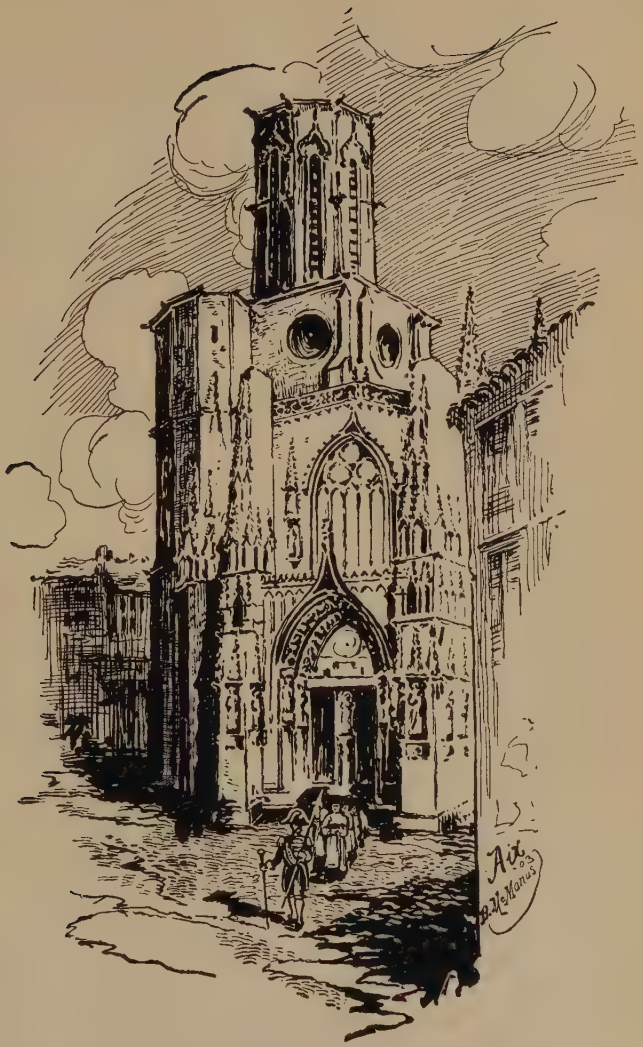
There was a veritable Aixian school of sculpture in the eighteenth century, and it is this which made Aix a town almost unique in France; its whole decoration has a charming harmony.

* *

Aix does not wish to forget that it was founded by a proconsul and was the headquarters of the legions of Marius. Since it has lost all its Roman monuments, since the only witnesses of its glorious origin are a few scattered columns and a few stones collected in its museum, since it has not even the ruin of an arch of triumph, it tries to give itself a Latin air by composing beautiful inscriptions. I have already spoken of those which ornament the public fountains; but the Latin versifiers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exercised themselves everywhere, under the portraits of the old inhabitants and upon the walls of the houses. It would be possible to make a *corpus* of their work.

I have noted down two of these inscriptions. They are not of the same character; they do not even offer the same kind of interest.

The first is a distich of admirable force and fullness. It was placed in 1790, by a surgeon named Muraire, under a mutilated and shattered bas-relief which had been discovered while excavating the foundations of the ancient Roman baths, and which is now in the museum. Here it is:



CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR, AIX.

Praeses Phallus abest; erasit barbara dextra;
Sed latet in calidis ipse Priapus aquis.

The second was placed on the wall of the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour at the cost of the chapter, in 1808. It commemorates an abominable act of vandalism. There was in the church a very celebrated oratory called the Sainte Chapelle, which dated from the eleventh century, but which, according to tradition, was the original church built at Aix by Saint Maximin, when he came to Provence, accompanied by Saint Madeleine. This little edifice had survived the centuries, respected by time and revolutions, when an architect and some canons took it into their heads to discover that it interfered with the beauty of the cathedral, and caused it to be demolished. Then, upon the wall of the new chapel of Sainte Madeleine, they vaunted their exploit.

The inscription says that Monseigneur de Cicé, bishop of Aix and of Arles, erected this new sanctuary "more elegantly decorated," after the ancient one, which was less notable because of its architecture and its antiquity than because of the devotion of the faithful, had been demolished,

OB OFFENDICULUM ASSYMETRIAMQUE!

"Because it obstructed and troubled the symmetry!"

"Ob offendiculum assymetriamque!" Here is an inscription which might be placed in every church in France which coalitions of canons and architects have devastated during the last century. That it is in the way, is the argument of the canons. That it injures the symmetry, is the argument of the architects. . . . The conclusion is always the same, that it is necessary to demolish.

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If the people of Aix desire to preserve the esteem of people of taste, they will do well to put a watch on the engineers and the publicity experts who flourish among them, as elsewhere, and who compromise the beauty of the town.

Aix has no street cars. Aix naturally desires to possess street cars. On the day when its wish shall be granted, the streets and the squares will be ornamented with frightful trolley poles and the clang of gongs or of horns will silence the murmur of the charming fountains. One asks in advance what use tramways will have in Aix, which has neither trade nor manufactures, and where the people always

pass through the streets at the gait of happy saunterers. But a city without street cars today is a humiliated city. Aix will have street cars. Besides, at the first glance, one is very much surprised not to meet them in the street. For, in every part of the town, there is already an inextricable tangle of metallic wires. The work of ugliness is accomplished. When we glance at the sky, the sky of Provence, striated with telegraph or telephone wires, we might believe that we were in the busiest of manufacturing cities. . . . And here the engineers have been peculiarly aggressive! All these wires are upheld by abominable supports painted blue which have been substituted for the modest poles of a few years since. It is in the positions chosen for all this ironwork that they have most clearly revealed their desire to make the town ugly. With extreme care, they have sought out every monument and every view whose beauty could be thus diminished; and they have found them, I assure you. The man who marked the places for telegraph poles in Aix was gifted with an acute sense for the destruction of the picturesque.

This is not all. The Place de l'Hôtel de Ville is a charming place, because of its fountain and its trees. The monuments which sur-

round them are among the most precious treasures of the town: on one side, that beautiful Renaissance tower crowned with such delicate wrought ironwork, that eighteenth century Hôtel de Ville, which contains the incomparable treasures of the Méjane library; on the other the Halle aux Grains, decorated by Chastel. The people of Aix ought to watch jealously for the protection of this magnificent picture.

The belfry tower just escaped being destroyed twenty years ago; it was necessary to class it as a historic monument to save it from the wreckers. But the Hôtel de Ville was not listed; they have placed upon its façade a deplorable bust of the Republic, and, in the courtyard, a so-called Mirabeau, which, although it be from the hand of Truphème, a sculptor of Aix, nonetheless disfigures all the lines and all the proportions of the edifice. Finally, here is the worst: the façade of the Halle aux Grains has disappeared under hideous advertisements, placards with a blue background, advertising all the pills and all the chocolates. This is a savagery peculiar to Marseilles.

If Aix desires to retain the right to shelter the university of the "province," she must resist the enterprises of the barbarians. Let her think of the ghost of Marius: it is time to do so.

PIERRE PUGET.

But above all, let her think of the greediness of the astute Phoceans. All that she has to defend is her beauty and her noble silence. What will remain of one or the other, when tramcars shriek in every by-way, and when old façades designed by Puget, decorated by Chastel, are delivered up to celebrate the glory of the sellers of bicycles and tonics?

She loves to be called the Athens of the South. This designation is baroque; may it not become ironical!

October 25, 1901.

CHAPTER V

THE CHARTREUSE DE MONTRIEUX AND THE CHÂTEAU DE VALBELLE

I

Montrieux

MONSIEUR HENRY COCHIN recently published a charming little book on Gherardo, the brother of Petrarch. In it he included some unpublished facts and new theories about the poet himself. In the course of an excursion to Provence, I have just visited the Chartreuse de Montrieux, where Gherardo was a monk. I have seen the places so charmingly described by Monsieur Henry Cochin; with his book in hand, "on the pious mountain and in the sacred wood," I have followed the paths where Petrarch passed, and here are the notes which I made while reading and strolling in this forest of Montrieux, one of the most beautiful oases of the land of Provence.

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Montrieux is seven leagues from Toulon, deep in the mountains. After the road has passed Solliès-Pont, it follows the valley of the Gapeau, a limpid and beautiful stream which flows under the overhanging oaks and willows. The valley becomes narrower, and we suddenly find ourselves in a dense forest.

On this bright February day, the rocky and wooded slopes appear as if they were clothed in sackcloth and ashes; but the soft light brightens this winter picture, and we perceive the flights of insects and the song of birds. In the depths of this ravine, which becomes ever narrower and narrower, the pines, the evergreen oaks, and the abundant ivy which wreathes the naked trunks of the leafless trees, the greenness of the herbage at the river's edge, the violets and the Easter daisies scattered everywhere, the perfume of lavender and the warmth of the air, all combine to give us a delightful illusion of spring.

The road crosses the Gapeau, then mounts amid wet and mossy rocks, under thick branches, to a great open space filled with meadows, in the midst of a ring of mountains. There, in the midst of silence and brightness, rise the buildings of the monastery.

This convent was only a ruin at the begin-

ning of the nineteenth century. When the Carthusians came to settle again at this spot, in 1843, they had to build a new monastery. They utilized the remnants of the ancient buildings; but the group of structures today is entirely devoid of character.

The door is barred. Two years ago the Carthusians departed, driven out by the persecutors. They were already being persecuted in the fourteenth century; for Petrarch once wrote to his friend Zanobi: "See how this truly celestial society of men, who have scorned honors and riches and crushed under their feet the invisible enemy, are today molested by visible enemies; between worldly tyrants and even ecclesiastical (a very sad thing to say!) they fall victims to avarice, and bitter need often requires them to lay aside their task of praising God. . . . On all sides they are surrounded by petty lordlings (*tyrannuli*), the most unsupportable of annoyances. The great lords often show some munificence, even in their avarice; the little ones never have any; they are always greedy, hungry, thirsty, and their little rapines inflame them to the hope of greater ones." The annoyance of the *tyrannuli* is not dead.

Half a league from the principal convent,

Montrieux-le-Jeune, we still find vestiges of another convent, Montrieux-le-Vieux. It was the *correrie:* thus one designated a house which, built in the neighborhood of a monastery, was placed in the care of the procurator or *courrier.* Here were housed the servants, the lay brothers, whose labors might trouble the meditation of the monks, and, finally, aged or infirm monks in whose favor the stringency of the rule was relaxed.

The site of Montrieux-le-Vieux is incomparable. Of the buildings of earlier days, nothing remains except a few sections of crumbling walls overgrown with brambles, the ruins of a rustic bridge, a few half-fallen fences. These ruins are overlooked by bold and gloomy bluffs; but in front of these, clear to the Gapeau, there spreads a magnificent, moist, and fertile prairie, intersected by brooks. This is indeed the *Mons rivulorum* (Montrieux). The most vigorous of these little torrents crossed the enclosure and turned the mills which ground the olives and the wheat. The landscape is at once terrible and smiling. Of all the retreats which the disciples of Saint Bruno chose for the concealment of their penitences and their prayers, none seems, because of these admirable contrasts, to be more suitable to awaken in the

soul of the recluse the two sentiments which exalt his faith: fear and hope.

Montrieux has a glorious history and beautiful legends. How was the convent founded, at the beginning of the twelfth century, sixteen years after the death of Saint Bruno? The monks of Montrieux told this to Petrarch when he came to see his brother Gherardo, and Petrarch, after having satisfied himself that the legend was questionable, repeated it to us as it was told him.

Two Genoan brothers, trained to commerce like all of their countrymen, were accustomed to depart on their travels, one to the east, the other to the west; then they met again in Genoa to exchange news of their doings. One day one of them found that his brother did not appear. He waited for him a long time, and finally learned that he had gone ashore at Marseilles. He went there to meet him, and found him profoundly changed. The brother said that he was tired of trafficking and wished to build himself a home where he might await death; then, saying no more, he led his brother into a forest, where he had built a cell far from men. The other imitated him, and both dwelt in this solitude where others joined them to observe in common the rule of Saint Bruno.

Did they establish themselves at Montrieux-le-Jeune or Montrieux-le-Vieux? Neither history nor even legend enlightens us on this point.

Montrieux flourished: the monks founded, in the Monts des Maures, the Chartreuse de la Verne, one of the most celebrated in Provence, whose ruins still stand in the midst of a superb chestnut forest.

The fame of Montrieux for holiness spread far. Its prior, the venerable Jean d'Espagne, worked great miracles, and the monastery enjoyed a portion of the glory of Sainte Roseline de Villeneuve.

The life of Sainte Roseline is a marvelous story. But how exquisite it becomes when one can imagine it in the very places where it was lived! It matches with so much grace the particular charm of Provence, the delicate light of the sky, the fine beauty which here belongs to the landscapes!

Sainte Roseline was born in 1260, at the Château des Arcs, the child of Arnaud de Villeneuve and of Sibille de Sabran, a daughter of the Comte de Forcalquier. She was called Jeanne. But one day, when still a child, as she was carrying bread to the poor, her father asked her what she was hiding in her apron. Desirous of keeping her charity a secret, she

replied that it was roses, and, in fact, an armful of miraculous flowers replaced the morsel of bread. That is why she was called Roseline.

She was five years old when she lost her mother, and prayed the Holy Virgin to replace the dead. Her prayer was granted, and, from that moment, her soul ascended incessantly toward her whom she called her "good mother in the heavens." Finally, she vowed her virginity to God and said that she would become a nun. Her father wished to oppose this plan. But, about the same time, the prior of Montrieux visited the Château des Arcs, and Arnaud de Villeneuve told him of the plan of the young girl. The prior questioned Roseline, became convinced that she was obeying the divine will, and her father made the sacrifice of his child.

She took her place among the nuns of Bertrand, whose abbess was a sister of her mother, and, when she was twenty-five years old, she consecrated herself to the Lord. The bishop of Fréjus prayed for her, placed upon her finger a diamond, which she was never to take off, and gave her the black veil and the crown of queens, ornaments which the consecrated virgin wears only thrice in her life, the day of her

vows, the day of her jubilee, and the day of her burial.

She observed humility and obedience; she sought silence and solitude. In return, God gave her the gift of tears and that of purity.

Her brother Helion was captured by pirates and thrown into a dungeon. But he prayed God and offered to Him the merits of his sister. Immediately it seemed to him as if he were waking from a long sleep; he had been transported by an invisible force from his prison to the immediate neighborhood of his father's château; he awoke in the midst of the abandoned ruins of the monastery of Celle-Roubaud. He understood that God ordered him, as a payment for the miracle, to re-erect this convent, and, with the aid of the prior of Montrieux, he there established a community of Carthusian nuns.

Roseline was called to the convent of Celle-Roubaud and became its prioress. But she soon abdicated and died as a simple nun. In her last hour, she beheld the apparition of Saint Bruno, accompanied by several blessed of the Order; they carried censors, and spread perfumes over the couch of the dying woman and all about the cell.

She was buried in the cemetery of the mon-

astery. A rose tree grew and flowered upon her tomb, and John XXII ordered that her relics should be removed to the chapel of the convent. . . .

While I thus relate some of the features of the life of Sainte Roseline, it seems to me that I can see once more a series of frescoes, representing these charming scenes. Where? I do not know. Possibly in some church of Tuscany.

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In 1342 Gherardo Petrarca entered the convent of Montrieux there to fulfil "the grand and hard labor of the religious life."

All that we know of Gherardo comes from the writings and the letters of his brother. This was the only source whence his biographer, Monsieur Henry Cochin, could draw information. He therefore gathered together and commented upon the facts scattered through the works of Petrarch and he described the monk from the testimony of the poet. He endeavored to establish a probable chronology. But even if the dates of the history are still a trifle uncertain, the drawing of the man is human and vivid. This portrait has the charm which we find in certain old paintings which

have half disappeared; at first we can scarcely distinguish a few confused remnants; but, by study, we discover gestures, draperies, the gold of a halo, the fire of two black pupils; a phantom slowly rises through the mist; our reverie sharpens the contours, restores the fragments which have disappeared; and finally an image appears to us which is as clear as and more moving than if it had remained intact in its first freshness.

Gherardo, the younger brother of Petrarch, was a child of exile: he was born in the Comtat Venaissin. The two orphan brothers almost always lived in each other's company. Doubtless Gherardo went to the university with Petrarch, and it is probable that he followed him in some of his long voyages; then both led the same life of dissipation at Avignon. Together they experienced the passions (*libidines*), the lengthy banquets (*conviviorum fastidia*), the interminable balls (*diuturnae choreae*), the hunting parties (*aucupationes*) and all the laborious pleasures (*laboriosa dulcedo*) imposed upon them by the tyranny of fashion. Then, as Petrarch says, "the oil of the fisherman anointed their delicate heads." Gherardo also composed verses, and, after his conversion, he regretted the little songs (*cantiunculae*) which

he had made for little women (*mulierculae*). But, like his brother, he had a great love. Francesco adored the immortal Laura de Noves. Gherardo loved a lady of whose name we are ignorant, *la Bella Donna,* as Petrarch describes her in a famous sonnet.

One day, the *Bella Donna* died. Gherardo fell into deep despair and was moved even to blasphemy; but from that day his way led slowly toward the cloister, for, even in his evil hours, he had preserved a predilection for St. Augustine and St. Arsène.

He accompanied his brother to Ventoux; in silence, he beheld Petrarch meditating, thinking over the history of his life, deploring his cherished errors, opening at chance to the "Confessions of St. Augustine," and finding this phrase: "And men are going to admire the heights of the mountains, and the vast waves of the sea, and the great falls of the rivers, and the shores of the ocean, and the revolutions of the stars, and they will abandon themselves to them." He followed him into his solitude at Vaucluse; but even this solitude was not made for a soul which sought rest; it was ill defended against friends and curious visitors. Laura de Noves came to visit Petrarch there; the *mulierculae* obtained admit-

FRANCESCO PETRARCA (PETRARCH).

LAURA DE NOVES.

tance to the house; one heard too many verses and one saw too many books. Now Gherardo was not a great humanist; he was not given to letters. He was a *parvulus*.

The *parvulus* heard the divine call: he became a monk to expiate his faults and to forget the *Bella Donna*. He had hesitated a long time; then, having gone to pray in the grotto of Sainte-Baume, he had reached Montrieux through the mountain thickets. He separated from his brother, giving him the threefold advice to confess his sins, to say his prayers day and night, and to renounce all the impurity of his life.

Thanks to Petrarch, we are able to enter the Chartreuse de Montrieux. For he came there twice to visit his brother, and has left us a description of these two trips.

The first was five years after Gherardo had entered the monastery. Petrarch reached Montrieux by way of Aix and Saint-Maximin.

"I have come," he said, "into Paradise; I have seen the angels of God on earth." He wept with joy at seeing his brother once more. Everything charmed him: the beauty of the solitude, the silence of the convent, "the angelic psalmody" of the monks. He was received "politely and civilly" by the prior Per-

ceval de Valence, a Provençal of high birth. He saw the monks assembled in their common room, and with each of them he entered into conversations which led his thoughts "sometimes hither and sometimes thither, but always towards the same goal, a pure and holy passion." He listened to these "heavenly oracles," and a day and a night passed so quickly that, when he departed, it seemed to him that he had said nothing of all the things which he had to say. His brother and a few monks accompanied him by the path (*sylvosus callis*) to the edge of the forest, and when he parted from them it appeared to him, he says, that he had come to find one brother and had met a great number.

The next year the great plague of 1348 broke out and devastated Europe. In three years the order of Carthusians lost nine hundred monks. When the pest appeared at Montrieux, the prior advised flight. But Gherardo opposed him: "I am ready to flee," he said, "if there is a single place on earth where death cannot reach us." As the prior insisted, he replied: "Go whither you will, I will remain at the post where Christ has placed me." Dom Perceval argued with the monk that he would die without any one to bury him:

"That," replied Gherardo, "is the least of my troubles. My burial is the business of those who survive and not mine." The prior fled and went to his old home to die. The other Carthusians remained at Montrieux, where they all died except Gherardo. "You assisted your dying brothers," says Petrarch, "you received their last embraces, you washed their cold bodies; it was your task to bury them with pious and untiring zeal, even two and three in a single day, and you bore them to the grave upon your shoulders." Gherardo remained in the monastery, with only a dog as a companion; he protected the holy house against the malefactors who ranged the countryside among a decimated and terrified people; then, when the plague had passed, he went to the Grande-Chartreuse and presented himself to the general chapter. They permitted him to choose monks to repeople and rebuild his monastery, and he returned to Montrieux, "as joyful as if he had won a great triumph. . . ."

And Petrarch ends the story of this sublime deed with this fine expression: "And even in the midst of such labors . . . the strength of your body remained robust, your health perfect, your care for your person such as is proper to a good monk."

A few days afterward, Petrarch, before quitting Vaucluse forever, passed another day and night at Montrieux to bid farewell to Gherardo. The monks took advantage of this opportunity to commit to their illustrious visitor the care of their worldly affairs. Petrarch bade farewell to his brother and never saw him afterward. In his will he left a sum of money to the convent of Montrieux, and, when he died on the slopes of the Euganean hills, a messenger carried the news of this to the Carthusians. A monk, who arranged the archives of the convent in the seventeenth century, told about the bequest of Petrarch and celebrated the memory of "the most polished man of his time in polite literature and the most learned in philosophy, as can be seen in his works."

Gherardo survived his brother. The date of his death is not known.

* * *

Leaving Montrieux, I took the way which Petrarch once traveled. I entered Méounes, the nearest village to the Chartreuse. With its fine and smiling grace, it is like all the villages of Provence: before the little church, a large terrace shaded with elms and made gay

by a fountain; stretching away from the last houses of the town, beyond low walls against which grow twisted fig trees, a wide and fertile plain; and farther away, a ring of stony hills where, among the olive trees, we perceive the sombre form of a great cypress or the white spot of a hut.

In the town square the loafers, who warm themselves in the sun, do not need to be begged to tell the passerby their anger against the modern *tyrannuli* who have driven the brothers of Gherardo from Montrieux, and taxed these poor people of Méounes with the amount which the monks formerly paid to the tax collector.

Some of the fragments of the monastery chapel were collected in the village church after the Revolution. You may still see there gilded and sumptuous altars, pictures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in frames of rare magnificence, delicate statuettes of Saint Omer and Sainte Delphine, and two charming, weeping infants in marble, fragments of the tomb of the Comte de Valbelle. And all these works of art contrast strangely with the frightful statues of modern fabrication which fill the church of Méounes.

Beyond Méounes, wide plateaus covered with vines, then woods, thickets, ravines, and the

road enters the large valley of Carami. From a great distance we may see standing upon a rock, like an ancient temple, a great marble colonnade. This is the ruin of the Château of Tourves. This palace was constructed in the eighteenth century in this strange position by the very high and very powerful Seigneur Joseph Alphonse Omer de Valbelle, Comte d'Oraison, a Vicomte de Marseille, Marquis de Tourves, Rians, Montfuron et Bressiure, Baron de Saint-Symphorien et de Meyrargues, Comte de Valbelle et de Sainte-Tulle, Vicomte de Cadenet, Seigneur de Cadarache, Rougiers, Venel, Peyrolles, and other places, one of the four first barons of Dauphiné, lieutenant of the king in Provence for the department of Arles, maréchal de camp of the armies of the king, and who is especially celebrated in the gallant chronicles of his era because he was, for nineteen whole years, the lover of Mademoiselle Clairon.

RUINS OF THE CHÂTEAU OF TOURVES.

II

Valbelle

As we approach Tourves, the appearance of these ruins becomes more singular and more grand. The magnificent Doric colonnade upon the rocky promontory which overlooks the huddled houses of the village has remained complete, though it stood in front of great structures which have crumbled; it has the air of an Acropolis against the bright sky.

The light and the location are partners in the witchcraft; the Provençal landscape confirms the deception of this extraordinary picture, by its harmonious rhythm and the fine precision of its lights. Our imagination is kindled by the most beautiful of illusions. Here is Greece! Here are the sacred marbles, the silver olives, the naked hills.

But when we have reached the esplanade where these ruins stand, we are forced to recognize that, decidedly, this is not quite Greece. Doubtless, toward the east, at every turn of the valley, the lines of the hills intermingle

and form in the distance designs of a grace which is quite Hellenic, while, nearer Tourves, the summits which rise toward the south carry abrupt crowns of rocks like great bastions. But the ragged and broken walls of the château are silhouetted against the horizon with a barbaric hardness, as sad as demolished buildings, without the charm of ruins. The colonnade which the eighteenth century applied as a sumptuous adornment to the edifice of former days charms us by its happy proportions and its sober robustness; but the counterfeit is apparent. The marble of which the columns are made possesses a rare beauty; it was extracted from the quarries of Tourves, famous for having furnished materials to the constructors of Versailles and of Marly; but it has not the overmastering brilliancy of a Greek marble.

In the midst of the esplanade there was erected a stone obelisk, an imitation of a Roman monument: the sight of this crude imitation completely banishes every phantom and souvenir of antiquity; its base bears the following inscription:

Conserve ma devise, elle est chère à mon coeur;
Les mots en sont sacrés; c'est l'amour et l'honneur.

Preserve my motto, for it is dear to my heart;
Its words are sacred; they are love and honor.

At once we are exactly in the middle of the eighteenth century, in pure classic bric-à-brac. Ended, the illusion of Greece!

Now, it is the reality which excites our curiosity. As we contemplate the remnants of this great palace, the ruins of its buildings, the remnants of its terraces, as we retrace upon the soil the plan of the structures, as we discover among the brambles the places where were clumps of trees which have disappeared, we wonder at the fantasy of the great nobleman who created this superb home on this rock of Provence. We would like by a flight of imagination to re-erect the walls of the château of Valbelle, to set up again the statues and the cypresses of the gardens, to call back the life of luxury and pleasure of which this spot was the theatre. Then we ask ourselves with anger how it has happened that in a century, in place of so much magnificence, there remain upon the stony and devastated hillside only eight marble columns and the parody of a little obelisk!

The sun has set, while I have been wandering about the ruins of Valbelle; I descend toward the dark streets of Tourves. The twilight is

not yet so sombre but what I can read at the corner of the first alley through which I enter the village: *Rue de la Révolution.*

* * *

I was told: "If you wish to learn about the Valbelles, go to Draguignan. You will see in the museum and library of this town a few stones of the château, and you will find that the librarian, Monsieur Octave Teissier, is the only man in France who knows the history of the Valbelles. . . ."

First of all I made the acquaintance of Draguignan, chief town of the department of the Var, which, like every chief town in France, rejoices in a prefecture, a prison, a theatre and gorgeous cafés. If we neglect—and they are negligible—the monuments which Draguignan possesses because of its high administrative rank, Draguignan very much resembles a large hamlet; but as this large hamlet is triply or quadruply Provençal, it is delightful. It has stone fountains, admirable plane-trees, gardens, wide avenues, then—in the midst of this belt of great trees—a very labyrinth of narrow, hilly, and interlacing alleys; it has cool little squares, vaulted streets, a fine square tower

planted upon a rock, ruined monasteries . . . ; and, in a long silent street called Rue de l'Observance, which was, I imagine, the home of the aristocracy of Draguignan, I saw a series of old mansions whose delicate doors should be defended against the house wreckers.

Later I made the acquaintance of the librarian of Draguignan, Monsieur Octave Teissier; like his town, he also is triply and quadruply Provençal, and he is delightful. Ah! the pleasant moments which I passed in the workroom of this ancient man, so full of wit, humor, and agreeable stories!

He awaited me, in the midst of his books and his prints. Wrapped in his dressing gown, his feet on a hot water bottle, he received me with a joyful smile of good fellowship, knowing that I came to converse of Valbelle; and Valbelle is his hero! He has studied Valbelle, he has collected documents and written pamphlets on Valbelle (Note 5). He confesses modestly that these works do not ever seem to have excited anybody but himself, and yet here is a traveler who is apparently interested in the castellan of Tourves! "Is it of his château or is it of his family that you want me to talk?" "It is of all these." "Then here are books, prints, photographs, manuscripts. . . ." And,

wide awake, the amiable Monsieur Teissier travels from shelf to shelf, from filing case to filing case, spreading his treasures under my eyes. Often, he strays from his Valbelle; he talks lovingly to me of his dear museum which I am soon going to see, for he is both custodian of the museum and librarian; he tells me how wily purchasers have come and proposed to purchase the curiosities of his collection. Then he tells me the story of his novitiate as a book collector and shows me his greatest finds: here is a first edition of La Rochefoucauld's "Maxims"; there are magnificent Renaissance choir books which he recently dug out in a Marseilles junk shop. And, as he knows all Provence, as he is Provence itself, as he is eighty years old and has a good memory, he knows a thousand picturesque and spicy anecdotes. He emphasizes them with malicious winks and, every time that he gets off a bit of his Gallic humor, he stamps three times, as if he were marking the rhythm of a joyous song.

The museum of Draguignan is very small; but it is well lighted and its modest treasures are displayed with taste and love. Besides, it possesses a masterpiece, the bust of the last Comte de Valbelle, by Houdon; it was formerly placed upon a tomb which stood in the church

BUST OF COMTE VALBELLE, BY HOUDON.

of the Chartreuse de Montrieux (I will return to this when I tell you the singular fate of this monument). A pretty marble Callipygos was found in the gardens of Tourves. Magnificent Chinese vases bear witness to the luxury of the apartments of the château. Monsieur Teissier showed me with pride two portraits of young girls by Van Loo and two beautiful paintings executed by Mignard in 1657, when he remained in Provence a year on his way back from Italy: one represents Isabeau de Valbelle, Marquise de Montalieu, and the other Suzanne de Fabry Marquise de Valbelle. My guide invited me to consider well the features of the latter, for reasons which I would perceive a little later.

The library is housed above the museum. It is extensive, for it contains the treasures of three convents. Its principal treasure is a collection of exquisite bindings; some of these books bear the arms of Valbelle, some the simple name Tourves. Derome has decorated with fine toolings these precious volumes, some of which contain comedies and others sermons. They do not appear as much out of place as one might believe in this public collection. The library of Draguignan occupies a pleasant old house. The bishops of Fréjus owned this house; they lined it with the wainscots which

still cover the walls; and, above the doors and the mirrors, they had little compositions painted which certainly are not masterpieces, but which give an air of worldly elegance to this episcopal home. Thus, one of these canvases represents a monkey which, having succeeded in getting into the dressing room, has climbed upon the least worthy of the furnishings of the worthy bishop.

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I had seen the ruins of Tourves; I had seen the portraits of some of the Valbelles; I had seen their books. Monsieur Octave Teissier judged that I was initiated and, when we had returned to his study, he drew from his shelves a thick volume. "This is," he said, "the *Livre de raison* of the Marquis de Valbelle." However lively might be my desire to know the history of this illustrious family, the valuable manuscript staggered me. But Monsieur Teissier had easily guessed that I had not the patient soul of a learned man; he spared me all the domestic and heraldic details contained in the *Livre de raison* and opened the index to a page where may be read this title: "Singular Discourse of Alphonse de Valbelle-Meyrargues,

Commander of Montfrain, upon the Character of the Ladies of his House."

I ran hastily through this most singular discourse, and I would like to introduce you to a few fragments of it, because it informs us of the history of the house of Valbelle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and especially because it is pleasantly phrased.

This Commander of Montfrain had been received as a Knight of Malta in 1647. He died in 1704. He wrote his discourse three years before his death. He was an old bachelor who had no softness towards the ladies of his family. And this is how he had chosen to begin his remarks in his *Livre de raison.*

"A proverb of Provence says that 'women make and unmake families.' See if this adage can not be applied to our house. My grandmother, who was over a hundred years old, and who was a living chronicle of everything which had happened for several hundred years in all the families of Provence, and especially in our own, thus proved it."

After recalling that in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries the affairs of the house of Valbelle went extremely well, the commander related that its decline commenced toward the end of the fourteenth century

through the fault of a woman, Thècle de Barthélemy, wife of Geoffroy de Valbelle, who wasted the wealth of her husband. Her grandson did worse yet: "I have not heard," continues our chronicler, "my said grandmother speak of Anne de Raynaud, his wife, but the conduct of the husband is more than sufficient to prove the lady innocent of all the accusations which my grandmother would have been able to make against the aforesaid Anne de Raynaud; for her husband, Jacques de Valbelle, left as much or more of his goods to a dozen bastards as he did to his legitimate children."

Let us stop before some of the portraits of this amusing family gallery, where, as one may see, the men are not always better treated than the women.

"The husband of Alayonne d'Arsaqui was called Honoré de Valbelle. For a number of years she played her game very well; for, as her husband was a man of much common sense and judgment, he had always known how to hold her somewhat in check; but when she had become a widow, she wasted more money in the five or six years that she survived her husband than she had done in forty years of marriage, and to cap the climax of her malice, she named

as her heir not Monsieur de Valbelle-Beaumelle, her son, not Madame de La Cépède, not Monsieur de La Cépède, son of her daughter, but Mademoiselle de La Cépède, her granddaughter, so that she might have the pleasure of crossing her whole family."

Relying on the good faith of his grandmother, the commander is not always as severe. He admits that there had been in the family a few women who were virtuous and good housekeepers.

He mentions with respect the beautiful ladies of the sixteenth century and also Françoise de Savournin, who was loved even after she was in her grave. This lady, heiress of the house of Aiglun, was well endowed with worldly goods and "they told marvels" about her wealth, but she died in childbirth at the age of twenty-four years, in 1640. "Jean Philippe de Valbelle, husband of Françoise de Savournin, could not be consoled for the death of his wife, and for several months they feared for his life; it is certain that although he had a very good reputation for courage before his wife's death, this became still greater afterward, and it was commonly said that he went about seeking for some one to kill him. In fact, although he was vice-admiral in the army

of Catalonia, he did not hesitate in the battle of Barcelona to fight at close quarters like a common soldier; he received a musket ball through the body which, in truth, did not kill him at the moment, but when this wound reopened in 1646, no remedy could be found and he died in his thirty-first year." There is everything in the *Livre de raison,* even fine sentimental stories.

The grandmother who inspired this singular discourse, Dame Aimare de Cabre-Roquevaire, has a fine place in this series of pictures. "No woman ever merited more from her husband, her children, her brothers-in-law than this virtuous dame; no one has ever seen such attention to the education of the one, to friendly conversation and harmony with the others. A solid and unostentatious piety was the foundation for all her acts, but she never allowed it to become noticeable. She was charmed when her friends amused themselves, hunted, danced, gambled; meanwhile she retired to her chapel, her only occupation being to pray God for prosperity for her family; God answered her prayers by giving her two beautiful daughters after her own heart, and to each of them a numerous progeny which she has had the pleasure of seeing even to the fourth generation. She

died extremely wealthy, in 1657, to the great regret of all her descendants, who loved her with one accord, and of myself especially, for whom she appeared to have a little more friendship, although she tried to conceal it."

After the ancestors, the contemporaries. To the admirable portrait of this noble woman, let us oppose the portrait of Suzanne de Fabry, who is a masterpiece of resolute wickedness:

"To such worthy women a monster has succeeded. I speak of Suzanne de Fabry, my sister-in-law; she brought such enormous wealth into our house that we never had a marriage comparable to it; but at the same time, she brought to it so many vices that it is difficult to believe so many could be collected in a single body. I was obliged to live with her for several years, and I can honestly say that I have never seen in her the least germ of good (the commander had written 'virtue,' but he crossed it out and wrote 'good': admire his scrupulousness!), but an extreme aptitude to every evil. She ruined our house from turret to foundation stone; she caused my brother to die of grief; and crowned her work during her widowhood by doing to his children, my dear nephews, every evil thing which she was able to imagine; she robbed them, then she wheedled their goods

away from them under the pretext of friendship and tenderness; when she had done this, she disinherited them and sent her own property after the lost investments; and finally, to crown all her other wickednesses, she left them lawsuits even to the fourth generation, because of all sorts of infamies which she thought out with great skill. God delivered us from this wicked woman in 1695, when she might have lived thirty years longer; so we must praise him for this thirty years of which he deprived her." I now understand why Monsieur Teissier drew my attention to the portrait of Suzanne de Fabry, which may be seen in the museum of Draguignan. This handsome young woman, whose features are a little hard, but who, with a bouquet of flowers laid across her knees, seems to have no other care in the world than to make us admire the adorable slimness of her hands,—this is the "monster." Does this portrait refute in undeniable fashion the diatribe of the terrible brother-in-law? I do not know. But—after two centuries have passed—how willing we are, for the love of this lovable portrait, to pardon all her crimes to Suzanne de Fabry, Marquise de Valbelle!

But the Commander de Montfrain pursues his discourse. Here is Antoinette d'Ablon, the

second wife of Léon de Valbelle, Marquis de Montfuron, "who gave him a son, the only hope of this house. In addition, this lady, in the eighteen months or two years that she was married, has devoured, besides the income of her husband, which was considerable, a sum of twenty thousand crowns; and by all appearances, she will not be very profitable to her son, for scarcely had her husband died, than she yielded to the wiles of a young man of Saint-Laurent d'Aigouy and brought a boy into the world less than ten months after her husband died. To such a great foolishness could she not add a greater one, which would be to marry the father of this child, with whom I was told at Avignon that she was still in relations? . . ." Behold Gabrielle de Brancas, wife of Joseph de Valbelle, president of the Parliament of Aix: "She is today given to high devotion and is even a disciple of Father Larderat, that is to say, a twenty-carat devotee, and, as she is already of a ripe age, I do not doubt that this devotion will stick to her like pitch. However that may be, I would much prefer that she should be the wife of Messire Joseph de Valbelle than mine."

And the conclusion of the "Singular Discourse" is that it is pretty nearly time to pay

attention to the favorite proverb of his grandmother, and by means of women to build up again the house of Valbelle which women have pulled down.

This knight of Malta, who thus judges all the ladies of his family from the standpoint of his own bachelorhood, is a delightful character. With what pleasure he must have inscribed all the scandals of his family in this great book which no one was to open! He is absolutely lacking in indulgence, but he knows how to write. And how these few notes uncover for us all the intimate history of a great family of other days! How they enable us to understand the part which money played in the fortunes of the French nobility in the seventeenth century!

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the house of Valbelle, after having been one of the most powerful in Provence, was traveling toward its ruin. But it was suddenly restored by events which the Commander de Montfrain had not foreseen. Two branches of the family became extinct and their wealth accrued to two others. Finally, in 1723, these two joined their fortunes by the marriage of André Geoffroi de Valbelle to Marguerite Delphine de Valbelle, the only heiress of the Marquis de Tourves.

Of this union was born Comte Joseph Alphonse Omer de Valbelle, who thus found himself in possession of twenty lordships and of five castles or mansions.

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Comte Joseph Alphonse Omer de Valbelle was a handsome gentleman with an agreeable countenance; he was renowned for repartee and grace; he had the fine qualities of his century and of his province. "If one desired," wrote one of the annalists of Provence, "to give to foreigners an idea of an amiable Frenchman, it would be necessary to present them to the Comte de Valbelle. He told tales charmingly, jested wittily, but always without malice, and submitted graciously to the slight repartees of which he might be the butt." Houdon thus represented him for us when he carved the bust which may be seen in the museum of Draguignan. Here are indeed the features of a man who has noble blood, kind-heartedness, wit, and little strength of character (Note 6).

At the age of twenty, he was colonel of the regiment of Berry. His biographers say that he distinguished himself on several occasions, and a Marseillaise poet thus sings his exploits:

Héros au milieu des alarmes,
Philosophe au sein de la paix,
Sa vie est un tissu de gloire et de succès,
Et les coeurs qui voudraient résister à ses charmes
N'échappent pas à ses bienfaits.

A hero in the midst of alarms,
A philosopher in time of peace,
His life is a fabric of glory and success,
And the hearts which might desire to resist his charms
Do not escape from his benefits.

But the hero quickly made way for the philosopher, and it was in the lobby of the Comédie Française that he scored his most brilliant successes. He and his younger brother, the Marquis Joseph Ignace de Valbelle, are cited in the chronicles of their times at every turn. The marquis—to whom were ascribed an enormous number of illegitimate children—had a daughter by Madame Molé; as to the count, his long affair with Mademoiselle Clairon gave him a certain celebrity in Paris. The glory of the *tragedienne* was reflected upon her lovers.

When, in 1818, Mademoiselle Clairon wrote, under the name of *Mémoires*, the romance by means of which she hoped to mystify posterity, she took care not to forget the infidelities of Valbelle: she blackguarded him without mercy and without danger. If we believe her tale, she was able for nineteen years to repel the

imprudent advances of her lover who endeavored with all his strength to marry her and carry her away to Russia, where he would have entered into the imperial service; but, like one of Corneille's heroines, she knew how to restrain her love and, thanks to her, Valbelle remained faithful to his honor and his king. Then, one day, for no reason whatever, the ingrate betrayed her and abandoned her. To crown his villainies, he had allowed the poor woman to sell her art collection and her curiosities in order to lend him the proceeds. It was then that, overwhelmed with sorrow, the lady, who was "born for sweet and consoling passions," went to Anspach to devote herself to the happiness of the Margrave.

The real story is simpler and less tragic; for fourteen years Valbelle and Mademoiselle Clairon adored each other and continually deceived each other; then one day, as the actress herself tells it, she perceived in her mirror that she was less handsome than usual. "With my nose touching the glass, illuminated by the strongest possible daylight, I beheld several wrinkles upon my forehead, at the two corners of my eyes, at the base of my neck! . . . My lips were less ruddy, my eyes less bright! and unfortunately I felt perfectly well at that

moment!" Then she realized that the battle was about to begin. For five years she still remained mistress of "a heart which many women fought for." Now, when this time had elapsed, she was fifty years old and Valbelle was forty-four. . . . And that is all! The rest is the vengeance of a woman. The story of the sale and the borrowing of the money is a pure lie. There is not the least reason why Valbelle who, since the death of his brother, had an income of a hundred thousand livres, should have accepted money from his mistress. Besides, Mademoiselle Clairon herself disproved it. At the moment when she was getting ready for her sale, she wrote to the young comedian, Larive, to whom she was very tenderly teaching elocution: "What I have sent to auction cost fifty thousand crowns. I do not hope to receive a third of this sum, but this third will be something; and, *besides adding to my comfort, it will assure your future . . .* " (Note 7). If you have no interest in the good name of Valbelle, at least admire the perfidy of the old actress.

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Valbelle, as long as he was the lover of Mademoiselle Clairon, lived principally in

Mlle CLAIRON.

Paris, where he owned a beautiful mansion with a large garden in the Rue du Bac (this mansion stood on the site of the house which today is numbered 34; it was the home of Fouché at the beginning of the nineteenth century). But he often came to Provence, either to Aix or Tourves, and he transformed the famous château into that magnificent residence whose strange ruins I have described.

The inventories which were drawn up during the Revolution enable us to imagine the aspect and details of this enormous creation.

The building occupied not less than twenty-five hundred square meters of ground space. Its two fronts were fifty-four meters long. A great interior court existed within the buildings. The château contained a theatre and immense rooms.

Each room was named for one of the ladies of Valbelle. There were halls named after the Marquise de Castellane-Majastre, the count's sister; Madame Alphonse de Valbelle, his sister-in-law; Madame la Marquise de Valbelle, his mother; Madame Anne de Demandols, his great-grandmother; Mesdames Gabrielle de Brancas and Suzanne de Fabry, his great-great-grandmothers; Mesdames Anne de Vintimille

and Anne Sylvie de Galian, his great-great-great-grandmothers, and finally, for the mothers of these last, Mesdames Aimare de Cabre and Marguerite Doria. There were also rooms named for Mesdames de Simiane, d'Arzaqui, de Candolle, etc. . . . All the great names of the nobility of Provence decorated this lordly house.

If we enter these apartments in the train of Mathieu Barbaroux, mayor of Tourves, and Jean Henri Sivan, secretary and *greffier* of the commune, who, in 1792, undertook the "classification" of the furnishings, we will be overwhelmed with the wealth which was then accumulated in the château: forty bedsteads with their baldaquins and hangings in very beautiful material; twenty-five sofas and a hundred and eighty-three arm-chairs, mostly covered with Gobelin tapestry; thirty-eight mirrors; fourteen chandeliers; twelve urns; magnificent carpets, etc. I cannot reproduce item by item, this interminable description. But I desire to copy the inventory of the gallery apartment, the name which was given to a hall used for gambling and social affairs, like the hall of a château of today. This dry list is sufficient to bring back with marvelous precision the luxury, the life and the amuse-

ments of a great residence of France, at the end of the eighteenth century:

"Gallery apartment.—Bust of Michel Nostradamus, over the window at the end.—Two curtains at each of the six windows, of yellow, lemon, and white checked taffeta.—Two doors, each with six mirrors.—Two quadrille tables, with stags' feet of walnut wood covered with green cloth.—Another three-legged table covered with green cloth.—Another for 'cizagonne (?),' covered with green corded velvet, with a hole in the middle for gambling.—Another six *pans* by three, covered with green cloth (Note 8).—Another, same dimensions, with stag's feet.—Three other large tables, the top of that in the middle of flowered marble with a medallion in the middle and two others of plain blue veined marble, each having trophies of quivers. Upon two of these tables are two porcelain urns seven *pans* high with gilded and garlanded decorations crowned by pineapples also gilded. (These are today in the museum of Draguignan.) Upon the middle table is a clock on its pedestal two *pans* high, with two four-branch candlesticks also two *pans* high, all gilded.—A round table of walnut used for playing with a ball.—A large tea table, used for the cups, upon its pedestal four *pans*

high, in mahogany.—Two little tea-tables on their pedestals, with gilded circular ornaments and marble tops.—A secretary of mahogany.—A reel in mahogany.—An embroidery frame in red wood gilded.—Two large sofas ten *pans* long, with four cushions each, all upholstered in yellow leather.—Twenty-two small chairs upholstered in yellow leather.—Eighteen arm-chairs with back cushions, all upholstered in yellow leather.—Six chandeliers with five branches, each carrying a three-branch light-holder.—A game of goose and a game of ball, in mahogany, each two *pans* by a *pan* and a quarter.—A statue of white marble, three *pans* and a half high, representing a nude woman, on a walnut pedestal.—Twenty-four large paintings, set in the plaster, of great persons, representing members of the family of Valbelle.—Seven paintings, also framed in the plaster, representing coats of arms.—Four other paintings, seven *pans* by five, representing different land and naval combats.—Another showing the plan of the hospital of Saint-Omer (three Valbelles were bishops of Saint-Omer).—A bust over the entrance door.—On each side of the entrance is a wooden book-case filled with large volumes.—Upon the marble tops of the said bookcases are person-

ages representing marine gods upon pedestals of gilded copper.—A little chair used for a prayer stool, upholstered in blue and white moquette.—A divan with three seats in green moquette."

Now imagine the light of Provence entering in joyous floods through the six windows of the gallery and illuminating the portraits of ancestors, the coats of arms, the naval battles, the statues, and the curiosities; imagine the guests of the château, "the most gallant men and the most lovely ladies of the province," scattered about game tables, one lady at her embroidery, another at her reel, others talking upon the great sofas, and, at the end of the large room, blazing with light, the bust of Michel Nostradamus, presiding over the gay leisure and the lively repartee of the fine company. . . .

Around the château stretched gardens and a park populated with statues. Valbelle loved art. It is alleged that he ordered certain statues from Houdon, but there is nothing to prove this. For the embellishment of his residence he went to Chastel, that Provençal sculptor who decorated with so much taste the mansions and the monuments of Aix. Chastel executed for Tourves two marble statues of

Venus and Pomona, the Four Seasons in the guise of four children, and several fountains surmounted by groups of animals. He was especially praised for "two roosters of colossal size fighting each other."

In the museum at Aix there is preserved a cast of a greyhound which it is said Chastel carved for one of the salons of the château. This dog belonged to Monsieur du Veyrier, lieutenant de la prévoté de la maréchaussée de France, at Aix. The count wished to acquire it. The lieutenant refused and when Valbelle insisted he finally replied: "This greyhound came to me with my wife; the marriage portion cannot be alienated." To console himself for not being able to have the original, Valbelle invited Chastel to make him a portrait of this wonderful dog, which shortly after died of rabies, to the great despair of the intractable Monsieur du Veyrier.

The count entertained at Tourves in the most brilliant possible state. One day, when a review was held, he entertained his whole regiment there; and he entertained it so well that when the horsemen left the festival they brandished their naked sabres under the great trees of the park, and called out their colonel's name like bandits. But, usually there was noth-

ing military about the festivals. Mirabeau compared the gatherings which took place at the château of Tourves to a court of love. There the whole nobility of Provence could be seen. Sometimes Mademoiselle Clairon also appeared. Under the pretext of giving a dramatic reading, this pensioner of the king departed for Provence. The Marquise de Valbelle shut her eyes. Father Cerutti, author of the *Apologie des Jésuites* and literary adviser of the household, stormed against the intruder. Then one fine evening, before the great colonnade which he had just built, Valbelle presided over a sort of academic session; he listened to dissertations by the wise and artistic men whom he pensioned, and, when these mediocrities had finished their readings and their speeches, the *tragedienne* appeared, and under the doorway, she declaimed Racine to the stars of the sky of Provence.

* *

In 1773—forty-four years old—Valbelle breaks with Mademoiselle Clairon, who leaves France and settles down at the court of Anspach. He then returns to install himself permanently at Tourves. On his arrival, the

provincial assembly designates him as procurator of the province for the nobility. A few months later he is named royal lieutenant of Provence. He has given up Paris so completely that in this same year he lets his mansion in the Rue du Bac to the Marquis de Monteynard.

In a letter which she has manifestly rewritten in order to insert it in her *Mémoires*, and which is dated February 20, 1774, the actress begs her former lover not to dwell in Provence and to remove himself from the influence of a woman who threatens his peace and honor: "She is a married woman who displays herself publicly as your mistress; who, though her husband lives, demands from you a promise of marriage; whose present age is such as to leave no hope of your having heirs; who retains you in places where, since the marriage of Mademoiselle de Marignane (Valbelle had asked for the hand of this lady; but Mirabeau had been preferred), you can no longer find anything which suits you, where you have the most ruinous expense, where everybody hates you from the bottom of their souls. . . . Is it in Provence, where pleasure alone occupies you, that you will find the promotion which you cannot give up?" These lines, like the whole long letter whence they are extracted, betray jealousy,

COMTE DE MIRABEAU.

resentment for some humiliation which she had formerly experienced in Provence, and especially a desire to blacken Valbelle in the eyes of posterity. Naturally, they contain a part of the truth. There was in Tourves a certain Marquise Des Roland who passed in public gossip as the mistress of the count; she was accused of having introduced discord into the "court of love," and there was current in Provence a malicious song the chorus of which was as follows:

Grand dieu! quel fléau
Que la madame du château!

Great God! what a scourge
Is the lady of the chateau!

But Clairon deceives herself or, to express it better, she deceives us, when she seems to believe that only the "Madame du Château" kept Valbelle at Tourves.

In the eighteenth century, it was not unusual to see gentlemen in the neighborhood of forty give up the vain life which they had led in Paris and suddenly return to life in the country. Such had been the case with Valbelle. From the day when he settled down on his own land, he devoted himself seriously to the duties which

had been entrusted to him by the king and the provincial assembly. He acquitted himself of them so zealously and fairly that his death caused great regret.

Valbelle was like many of his contemporaries. While he was a man of taste and parts, he was at the same time an honest man. Though weak, sensual, and corrupted, he was full of a goodness which was a little bit soft, a compound of humanity and charity. Christian by tradition, and philosophers because it was fashionable, the nobility of the eighteenth century were compassionate and beneficent: the hearts of men then lacked energy, but they also lacked hardness.

Naturally, the castellan of Tourves turned to philosophy. Upon the terrace of his château, not far from the pyramid of Sextius, he set up a Gothic ciborium, brought from the church of Tourves: there was a great liking in those days for such constructions. He caused to be carved upon it this inscription, which may be bad poetry, but which has a frankly Voltairian turn:

A grandeur trop souvent succède ignominie.
Du temple que j'étais, église je devins;
J'en conçus trop d'orgueil; on m'a fait écurie.
Passant qui vois l'affront dont ma gloire est suivie
Apprends sans murmurer, à céder aux destins.

Grandeur is but too often succeeded by ignominy.
I have become a church instead of the temple which I was.
I took too much pride in my state; I have been turned into a stable.
Passer, who seest the fall which has come to my pride,
Learn to accept thy fate without murmuring.

And behold how Valbelle understood and expressed "the love of humanity." One day he met an old peasant staggering under a heavy load of wood. "My friend," he said to him, "drop this burden which is crushing you, and receive this money in place of it." The old man stammered his thanks. Then Valbelle, smiling, gave him this answer which would have made Diderot weep: "You owe me nothing; I am your debtor, because I am richer than you."

This same man begins his will with these truly Christian words: "I recommend my soul to God; even though I have offended Him, I can never have had the folly to offend Him deliberately; so whatever may be the number of my sins, as they have not been voluntary, I abandon myself to His mercy with confidence."

This whole testament is a precious document in other respects. Its bequests reveal the tastes, the inclinations, the follies and the friendships of Valbelle. Its expressions of

nobility and graciousness reveal a generous and tender heart.

After having begged for Divine mercy, Valbelle bequeaths six thousand livres to the Chartreuse de Montrieux, "of which Guillaume Bertrand and others of the name of Valbelle, viscounts of Valbelle, his ancestors, were the first benefactors in the twelfth century." He asks these monks to receive his body, and he wishes that twenty thousand livres should be employed in the construction of his mausoleum. This is the last satisfaction which he gives to his love for luxury and sculpture. Then follow the wishes of the philanthropist: he provides a dowry for twenty poor young women; he creates a trust fund with an income of five hundred and fifty livres for the benefit of some poor gentleman of the province, a military or naval officer who shall have served honorably for ten years; he bequeaths to the town of Aix thirty thousand livres, "which sum shall be employed to construct an obelisk in the midst of the Rond des Minimes, upon the highway from Aix to Avignon, and to decorate this place." (Obelisks were fashionable in Provence in the eighteenth century.) He leaves to "Messieurs de l'Académie Française" twenty-four thousand livres, so that every year they may award

the income from this fund "to some literary man who shall have proved his ability or merely given hopes of it."

After he has thus thought of the repose of his soul, satisfied his conscience, and insured the perpetuation of his glory, Valbelle generously recompenses his servants, leaves some of his properties and a considerable sum of money to a certain Sieur de Caussini, who passes as the natural son of his brother; then he takes care of his debts of affection or gratitude. The first person of whom he thinks is Mademoiselle Clairon. "I bequeath," he declares, "to Mademoiselle Clairon, pensioner of the king, an annuity of four thousand livres." (The actress has not spoken of this legacy in her *Mémoires!*) He leaves an annuity to his old regent the Abbé de Montclar, "formerly a Jesuit," and a diamond worth twelve thousand livres to each of his two lawyers. Then comes the turn of his friends. It is impossible to imagine anything more gracious and more exquisite than the formulas of affectionate courtesy with which each legacy is accompanied.

"I leave to Monsieur de Ballon, my cousin, counsellor of Parliament, the one of my snuff boxes which he may choose, which I pray him to be kind enough to accept as a slight mark of

my remembrance and my friendship.—I leave to Monsieur le Marquis de Marignane, the one of my snuff boxes which he may choose, and my ring with an engraved gem representing Henri IV; because of my sentiments toward him, he must be willing to accept this.—I leave to Monsieur le Vicomte de La Rochefoucauld de Surgères my tablets of lacquer mounted in gold and adorned with eight portraits, and I beg him to accept them as a present made by my heart."

He does not forget the beautiful ladies who did him the honor to be his friends:

"I leave to Madame de Croze, née de Charleval, my enamelled repeating watch which is set with diamonds, its chain and its seals, together with my ring of green crystal surrounded by diamonds and set with a monogram in diamonds; the honesty and respect which have always been a part of my sentiments toward her will not permit her to refuse this mark of my remembrance.—The same motives recall to my mind the following ladies: I leave to Madame la Marquise de Roye, née Mademoiselle de Mailly, my snuff box of grey enamel mounted in gold with a miniature in the centre, surrounded with diamonds; I hope that of her kindness she will not refuse to accept it from me.—I leave to Madame la Marquise Des Ro-

land, née Mademoiselle de Montvallon (she was the 'Madame du Château') my round snuff box of gold enamelled in red, and the white diamond which I wear at my throat; the kindnesses with which all her connections honor me, my respect and my attachment for her impose upon her that she shall not refuse the kindness which I ask of her in accepting this mark of my remembrance.—I leave to Madame Landri, née Mademoiselle Bourret, my snuff box showing views of Tourves, which I beg her to accept as a testimony of my gratitude for the friendship she has always shown to me. . . ."

One may easily guess what is concealed by these honest words of gratitude and respect. But how this posthumous modesty surrounds itself with a pretty ceremonial!

He bequeaths slight souvenirs to his brother-in-law and his sister, the Marquis and Marquise de Castellane, fifty thousand francs to his niece, and makes his mother, the Marquise de Valbelle, his residuary legatee.

This will is dated 1773. Valbelle died of a stroke of apoplexy on November 18, 1778, during a trip to Paris. Two days before he died, the king had signed for him "the great commission of civil governor of Provence."

* *

The Château de Tourves passed into the hands of the Marquise de Valbelle, and from her into the possession of the Marquis de Castellane, her son-in-law. The marquis became an exile during the Revolution, and the furnishings of the château were sold at public auction in 1793. A few artistic pieces were then sent to Saint-Maximin, the seat of the Directory of the district, and were finally distributed among the museums of the department. Almost all the rest was bought at sacrifice prices by the inhabitants of Tourves, who heaped up these riches in their own homes: it is said that some of them remained in the possession of the descendants of the purchasers; but others, the larger and more valuable part, were long since carried away by the second-hand dealers of Marseilles and of Toulon.

The château itself was plundered by the population. They hacked the carvings, destroyed the wardrobes, broke up the statuary, carried away the mantels. The military administration, which had need of certain materials for its munition factories, ripped out the iron and lead. In 1793, some of the buildings were taken over for a military hospital, and to fit

it for this new purpose, still more of the mantels and doors were torn away. The citizens of Tourves took advantage of this opportunity to plunder everything in the abandoned portion, to carry off the locks, and to break the windows and mirrors. Finally, in 1798, the property was sold at auction. The buildings, on the testimony of experts, were "shattered and devastated, without roofs, doors, or windows."

Mathieu Barbaroux, notary and former mayor, was the purchaser of the château and the two parks which surrounded it. He did not touch the ruins, which continued to crumble away. It is said that the people of the village, the same ones without doubt who had so well pillaged the château, made Mathieu Barbaroux intensely regret the good bargain which he had made by purchasing the property of the Valbelles for a handful of assignats. It is even said that this disapprobation caused the daughter of the new lord of Tourves to die of grief. Nevertheless, neither Barbaroux nor his widow were willing to give up the property. But, in 1849, after the death of Madame Barbaroux, her brother thought that it was his duty to bequeath the ancient estate of the Valbelles to the representative of the family, the Comte

de Castellane. Can we not sense here a terrible domestic tragedy, the scenario for a romance by Balzac? What a setting would be furnished by this poor hamlet of Provence with its narrow valleys! And what names could be more truly Balzacian than *Tourves* and *Mathieu Barbaroux!*

*
* *

An absurd but enduring legend has spread in Provence in regard to the mausoleum of Comte Valbelle. This is the tale.

With the dream of resting after his death among the images of the women whom he loved the most, Valbelle begged Houdon to execute four marble statues representing the actress Clairon, the dancer Guimard, and two other ladies on whom he had showered the proofs of his tenderness. Then he invited the four ladies to come and pass a few weeks in his château of Tourves. He offered them all sorts of festivities, and one day proposed to the company the diversion of an excursion to the Chartreuse de Montrieux. They entered the chapel, and what was the surprise of the young women when they saw their own statues placed around a tomb, and, in the open grave, the

count, who had considered it amusing to lie there as if he were dead! They fled, shrieking with terror and anger. As for Valbelle, he was found a few moments later, still lying in the depths of his tomb; he was dead.

This gruesome story, which came full-fledged from the imagination of a journalist in 1822, has been republished a score of times. When one of the statues of Valbelle's monument was taken to Sainte Baume and presented for the adoration of pilgrims as an image of the Magdalen, it was asserted that this statue was the portrait of Mademoiselle Clairon. Even Lacordaire believed this: "Inglorious marbles," he says, "form the chapel of the saint, and, behind her altar, upon that mysterious rock where her vigils and her ecstasies took place, there rests a profane, half-reclining statue unworthy to hold the chief position in this majestic place, all of whose memories are saddened by her."

Monsieur Octave Teissier has demonstrated by ten excellent proofs that this whole legend is false. Valbelle died in Paris. Mademoiselle Clairon had been at Anspach for five years at the time. The mausoleum was executed after the count's death by the order of his mother. You can also compare the statue at Sainte Baume with the portraits of Mademoiselle

Clairon: there is no resemblance. However, the true history of the monument is curious and is worth telling.

The tomb was erected in the church of the Chartreuse de Montrieux in accordance with the desire expressed by Valbelle in his will. We know its appearance and composition, thanks to a sketch annotated by the hand of the Marquise de Valbelle, a sketch which agrees with the description of the inventory drawn up during the Revolution: four statues of women decorated the monument, two standing, two seated and reclining upon the tomb. A motive formed by two little weeping genii, guardians of the funeral urn, crowned the monument.

Only the bust was by Houdon. It had been executed to be placed in the assembly hall of the Académie Française, in memory of the legacy which Valbelle had made to the association. It was displayed to the public on the day when d'Alembert delivered the eulogy of the benefactor, and Madame de Genlis, who was present at this session, relates that "the bust was praised more than the eulogy." As to the other statues, Monsieur Teissier asserts—with much probability—that the two sitting statues are by Christophe Fossaty, a sculptor of Marseilles; the other two appear to be by a more

STATUE OF HOPE.

From the Mausoleum of Comte Valbelle.

delicate and skillful hand; the name of Chastel has been suggested; this attribution is plausible, but let us not speak of Houdon.

Although they were sold in 1790, nevertheless the statues of the mausoleum remained in the ruined church of the convent of Montrieux until 1822. At that time they were repurchased by the prefect of the Var, who, after he had had them restored, sent them to different *arrondissements* of his department.

The allegory of "Hope" was placed at Sainte Baume and there became Sainte Mary Magdalen. Nevertheless they took care to seat her upon a rock, in order to render the metamorphosis more probable.

As the civil court of Draguignan lacked a statue, it was given "Strength" which was turned into "Justice," and in order that no one might be deceived, the restorer rested this allegory against a little square altar, on which he placed two books and carved in bas-relief an eye and a hand holding scales; he also took advantage of the opportunity to "embellish" the original work and to render it more "decorative," by adding to it a great flowing drapery.

"Provence" remained "Provence" and went away to Toulon, where she suffered certain

hardships; this charming "Provence" holds up the forefinger of her left hand and seems to express by this gesture "that there is only one of them and she is that one"; this attitude aroused the indignation of the young misses of Toulon, who broke off the impudent forefinger by throwing stones at it. The offensive allegory was then relegated to a public park. Now she is in the museum.

A "Sainte Monica," henceforth designated under the name of a "Vestal," was sent to Fréjus, but, as she was destined for the decoration of a public fountain, the restorer put under her arm a sort of vase whence gushes a jet of water; and she has not lost all her grace in this new occupation.

The bust had been taken away from Montrieux during the Revolution. It was discovered in an old mill in the suburbs of Brignoles in 1811, by an Italian sculptor; as it was lying on the ground, face down, and was used as a seat by the miller, it had a scar on the end of its nose. It was given shelter in the museum of Draguignan. Finally, the two weeping infants—they are exquisite—are preserved, as I have told you, in the church of Méounes, near Montrieux.

So it is that the Dominicans of Sainte Baume,

and the people of Draguignan, of Toulon, and of Fréjus, have divided the remnants of the mausoleum of Valbelle, and that today, to reconstruct this monument, one of the most beautiful and celebrated of eighteenth-century Provence, it is necessary to make the round of a whole department.

March 11–18, 1904.

CHAPTER VI

BRIGNOLES AND THE ABBAYE DE LA CELLE

I

Brignoles

THE little town of Brignoles is huddled upon a little hillside in the midst of a wide valley which resembles a great flowery orchard. . . . Formerly, it was celebrated for the excellence of its plums. Philologists have even asserted that its name is formed from two Celtic words: *brin*, plum, and *on*, good, from which was formed *Brinonia*. It has preserved its reputation; but it lost its plums more than three centuries ago. In 1570, as Monsieur de Vins had refused to pay the taxes claimed by the town of Brignoles, the people devastated his property and destroyed 180,000 plum trees. Since that time, the plums of Brignoles come from Digne.

This beautiful valley of Carami is, among all the regions of Provence, that which most imperiously makes us think of Greece. The

little mountains which enclose it, and which are crowned by evergreen oak woods, have the precision, elegance, and dryness of a Greek landscape. Toward the west, we behold high rocky peaks which are called—quite simply—Mount Olympus, and this is not ridiculous. Finally, this very name Carami, with its Greek perfume, completes the intoxication of our imagination.

Intoxication truly grips us when we enter Brignoles. This sub-prefecture is charming; but its charm is just that of all the little towns of France, silent, smiling and melancholy, where the past is very living and the present is a little dead.

The old town, rugged and hilly, has narrow streets which wind about with unexpected twists, following the sites of the various walls which today have disappeared; twisting flights of steps, stony ascents, archways, low doors and blind alleys. The houses near the church support each other, throwing their great stone arches over the heads of the passers. Here and there are little squares with great plane-trees and living fountains. It has the picturesque and charming exterior of a small city of Provence, where everything is a defence against the ardor of the sun or the fury of the mistral.

A very amiable citizen of Brignoles has volunteered to guide me about his town; he leads me through the alleys and the squares, stopping at each step before one of those charming pictures which are here composed by the play of light and shade; he opens for me the doors of old homes; he is full of anecdotes and stories; he loves his land and its sky, and he does its honors to the charmed Northerner with that delicate graciousness which is the most lovable expression of the Provençal character. The air of Provence "subtilizes all things," said Madame de La Fayette.

* *

At hazard, I note down curiosities and souvenirs of the stroll and conversation in Brignoles.

Here, in the court of a house, two fragments of sculpture of the eighteenth century: a marble bas-relief, representing an Amphitrite, and the bust of Nostradamus. These are relics of the château of Tourves. Above the door of an old Ursuline convent smiles a charming Virgin of the seventeenth century.

Facing a square planted with old elms there stands a house of fine appearance. Here lived

François Just Marie Raynouard, the glory of Brignoles; Raynouard who excelled in the tragic at the time when Ecouchard Lebrun excelled in the lyric, Raynouard who, after having been a lawyer at Brignoles and president of the Patriotic Society of the Friends of the Constitution and of Equality, sat in the Legislative Assembly, Raynouard, author of *Les Templiers* and father of Romanticism. It seems that this man loved to give to his countrymen the spectacle of a poet rapt by inspiration. He had his worktable carried out in front of the door of his house under the trees of the square, and, under the eye of passersby, he sought rhymes, constructed alexandrines, and composed *Socrate au temple d'Aglaure,* in which, according to Marie Joseph Chénier, he united "skill in style to richness of arrangement."

In a little narrow street, a twelfth-century house, which has remained untouched, presents its venerable façade and the delicate little columns of its small twin windows.

At the summit of the town, facing a silent square, stands an old château whose crown of battlements has been preserved. This was the fortress of the town in the Middle Ages, and later the winter residence of the counts of Provence. Now it is the home of the sub-

prefect. At the corner of this edifice is a small niche, which is now empty. Two months ago you might have seen there the bust of St. Louis of Anjou, the patron of Brignoles. This image was greatly revered here; every year, on the saint's day, it was taken from its niche and carried in procession about the town. Then, one day, on orders which came from "above," the bust disappeared from the place which it had occupied for centuries. The sub-prefect, to remove the menace of religion from his sub-prefecture, had this compromising piece of sculpture removed, and poor St. Louis has gone to hobnob with Charles X, Louis Philippe, and Napoleon III in the dust of the municipal attics.

"Do you remember," said my guide to me. "that Monseigneur Myriel, the bishop in *Les Misérables,* was at first curate in Brignoles? Now, you know that Monseigneur Myriel is not a character created by the imagination of Victor Hugo. He was named Monseigneur de Miollis and was in fact curate of Brignoles in 1804. We will find his portrait in the presbytery, where all the portraits of the curates of Brignoles are preserved. . . .

The curate of Brignoles was very willing to admit us into the hall where all these paintings

are arranged. The picture of Monseigneur de Miollis appears in the collection. But, alas, it is a commonplace, mediocre, and conventional painting; it is not possible to believe that it was painted from life (Note 9).

The curate let us into his church by means of a little covered bridge thrown across an alley.

The interior of Saint Sauveur, the parish church of Brignoles, is characterless; two churches have been united here with indifferent success, but the principal façade retains a beautiful Romanesque portal. From the church of the Cordeliers, now secularized, there has been brought and placed in one of the chapels of Saint Sauveur a superb altarpiece of the seventeenth century, in which are enclosed the relics of St. Louis of Anjou. They also showed me a delightful lectern of bronze of the time of Louis XIII and a finely carved door which closes the sacristy.

In the same sacristy, on top of a cupboard, is placed the bust of Pius VII, a souvenir of the visits of this pope to Brignoles in 1809 and 1814. I was shown two rather interesting documents in regard to this event, which left a vivid memory in the minds of the people of Brignoles.

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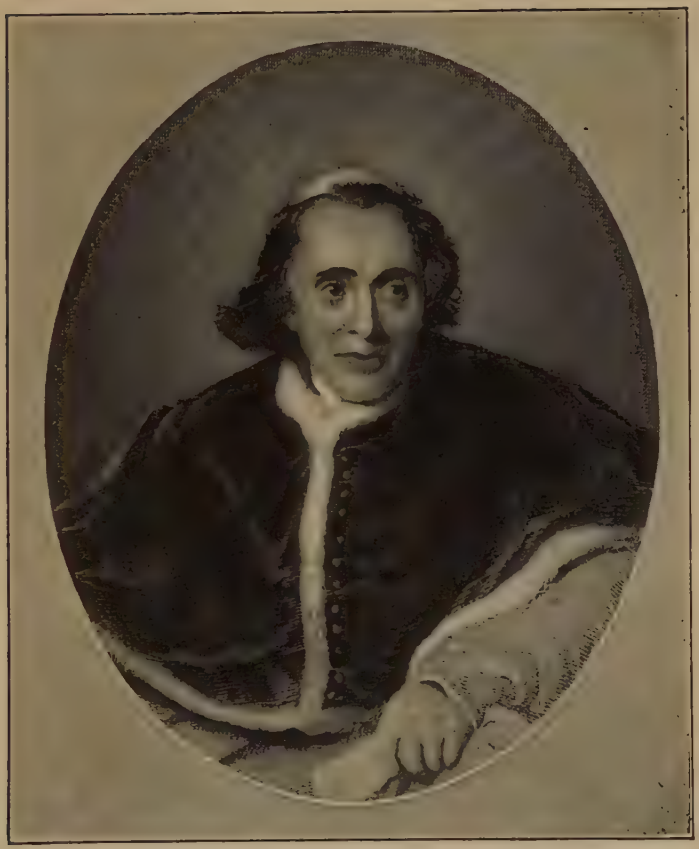
* *

In 1809, when, at Napoleon's order, Pius VII returned from Grenoble toward Savona, he went through Brignoles. On this occasion, although a great crowd gathered at the roadsides to receive the benediction of the Pope, the clergy hesitated to compromise themselves, knowing they were closely observed by the imperial police. When the pontifical carriage halted at the entrance to Brignoles, a poor Benedictine monk presented himself all alone to give homage to the Holy Father. The curate, Monsieur Jujardy, did not appear, and four days later he wrote to his friend, Monsieur Rey, canon at Aix, the following letter:

"Brignoles, August 9, 1809.

" . . . You ask me what I can tell you of the passage of the Holy Father through our town. I will commence with the most lively regret that I was not able to see him, although there would have been plenty of time to see him. He arrived the fifth instant at two o'clock in the afternoon. He took rooms at an inn outside of the town, and no one was aware that the Pope was in Brignoles. An unverified rumor commenced to spread in regard to his arrival:



PIUS VII.

they let the children and the curious, who had nothing to do, run out to see, and every sensible person believed that it was a canard like so many others of the same kind. I was then completely buried in my confessional, since it was not only Saturday, but also the vigil of our patron saint. They sent to me one after the other three messengers to advise me of the occurrence. Unfortunately I only saw the third one. I dropped everything to fulfil so consoling a duty, but he was already gone, before I had made more than a few steps outside of the church. He received kindly everybody who appeared to receive his benediction and, to satisfy the great throng which the inn could not hold, he had the grace to appear upon his balcony, whence he blessed the gathered assembly. He was in his pontificals, accompanied by a young cardinal, the son of the Duke of Savoy. The Holy Father appeared to be very tranquil, without any appearance of preoccupation. His suite had a contented air. A lady asked the young cardinal if she could inquire of him without indiscretion to which town in Italy the Holy Father was returning. The reply was that no one knew anything about it. We presume that it is to Milan. . . ."

This good Monsieur Jujardy, who, in 1809,

had so unluckily remained "buried in his confessional," was able to console himself for this annoying mischance five years later and to receive the benediction of Pius VII. Times had changed. The Pope, still a prisoner, had just crossed France; Commandant Lagorsse, who was entrusted with the care of his person, was conducting him to Savona; but everybody, the Pope included, believed that Rome was the goal of the voyage. Everywhere enormous throngs of people greeted the passage of the Holy Father. "Never was triumph more complete," wrote Commandant Lagorsse from Orgon. "Constituent bodies, clergy, music, canopies, banners, all the appurtenances are present; and it is as impossible to prevent this display and these demonstrations as it is to make the Rhone flow backward. . . ." (Note 10). When Pius VII arrived at Brignoles on February 8, not only the curate, but also the sub-prefect hastened to the door of the Pope's carriage. And, a few days later, Monsieur Jujardy wrote to his friend the Canon Rey:

"February 14, 1814.

"You wish to know, Sir and dear brother, what happened when the Holy Father passed through our town. Everythng which enthusi-

asm can produce among a populace which was convinced that peace was restored to the church and that its head was returning to his dominions. Together with a great number, I was aware that there was no truth in this; but the presence of a personage, as illustrious as unfortunate, inspired in advance only a still more lively interest in his situation. . . . His Holiness did not arrive until after nine o'clock, and they desired to cause him to continue on his way without unharnessing. The obstacles were too serious. The carriage and the horses were blocked and buried in the crowd. With the most extreme difficulty I reached the right side of the carriage. There was an order forbidding the opening of the door. A gendarme disobeyed orders. The door was opened and I had the consolation of seeing and speaking with the Holy Father and of receiving his blessing. The sub-prefect and the mayor presented themselves on the left and spoke to the Holy Father; but, in the horrible chaos, it was impossible to make oneself heard or to understand a single word of what the Pope was able to say. He did not leave his carriage and, after a quarter of an hour, continued on his way laden with more blessings than he had been able to dispense. A carriage was soon sent in pur-

suit and, after it had overtaken his, under the pretext of presenting him a cross to be blessed, they did what you did yourself, in the persuasion or the fear that he needed something. He seemed to look better and to have a more serene air than the first time he was here.

"The day after he left, the Cardinal d'Agnaisi (Dugnani), bishop of Albano, arrived. He is here, under the charge of the sub-prefect. He is still more in my charge, since I never leave him and neglect nothing to lighten his disgrace. He praises us; I desire that there should be reason for it. On the whole he appears satisfied.

"Cardinal Ruffo passed the day before yesterday, Saturday, on his way to Grasse. I understand that he will be well received there. The cardinal-vicar (Monseigneur della Somaglia) arrived yesterday evening. I had the honor of passing the evening with him. The sub-prefect brought his associate to call. He left this morning for Draguignan. He will find assistance from Monsieur Cavalier, the more so as they must know each other. He will find the thermometer of his hopes in the attitude of the prefect" (Note 11).

This last phrase is a masterpiece of policy. But compare these two letters with each other:

they are, to speak as Monsieur Jujardy did himself, sufficiently thermometric.

*
* *

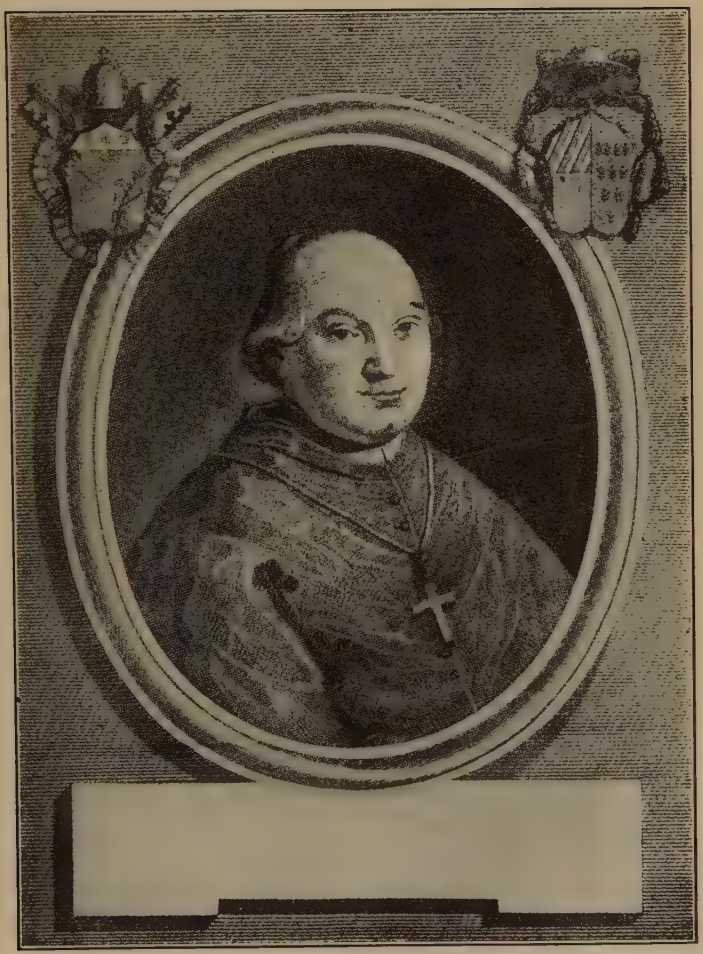
In the last lines of his letter of 1814, the curate of Brignoles gives the names of some of the cardinals who were, as a matter of policy, exiled to the south of France, at the moment when Pius VII was traveling toward Italy in charge of Commandant Lagorsse.

Brignoles was the residence assigned to Cardinal Dugnani. When he arrived at Brignoles, he took rooms at first at the Auberge de la Poste. But a notability of the town, Monsieur Marius Lebrun, offered him hospitality. The house of Monsieur Marius Lebrun faced the Rue Notre Dame, which at the end of the eighteenth century had become the richest quarter of the town.

Since the cardinal left it, nothing has been changed in this beautiful home in the Rue Notre Dame, and, when we enter it today, we have before our eyes the interior of a citizen of Brignoles in 1814. Hangings, furniture, and ornaments, everything has remained in its place, not by the caprice of a collector, but simply because the same family has lived in

the same house for more than a century, and because it has preserved its decorations.

On the street floor, one room still has on its walls charming papers painted in grisaille, on which a series of compositions in the manner of Prudhon represent the story of Psyche. On the first floor, the cardinal's room is hung with magnificent purple hangings; in the salon, elegant wall-paper of Louis Seize design harmonizes gayly with the frames of the mirrors and the carved piers; in another bedchamber, which was allotted to the secretary of the exile, the pale tones of the woodwork, the panels above the doors, and the furniture, form a delicate harmony. Everywhere there are chairs upholstered with precious tapestries, "tête-à-têtes" of fantastic and gallant design, gorgeous beds, and swell-front wardrobes. Upon the pleasing marble mantels they have left the charming clocks which sounded the hours of exile for the bishop of Albano. All these furnishings, all these insignificant objects here assume a singular beauty. At the thought that these rare and exquisite things have never passed through the dishonoring backshop of a second-hand dealer, we find in them a more perfect nobility, a more moving charm.



CARDINAL DUGNANI.

Who was then this poor Italian prelate, shut up in Brignoles by Napoleon's will?

I have run through the memoirs of Pacca and those of Consalvi. There is much said of the "good cardinal" Dugnani. But what I have learned most certainly about this "good cardinal" is that he did not have the soul of a hero.

He experienced all sorts of tribulations while bishop of Rhodes *in partibus,* he attracted the attention of Pius VI, and was sent as nuncio to the court of Louis XVI. When the Revolution broke out, he attempted, as his position suggested, to oppose the great ecclesiastical reforms of the Constituent Assembly. Naturally, the clubs accused him of supporting the "royalist manoeuvres" and, one day, he judged it prudent to leave Paris, to go and take the waters at Aix, and, from there, to reach Milan.

As cardinal-priest of Saint-Jean, he was a member of the conclave of Venice which elected Pius VII. He swayed, like every member of the Sacred College, before the frightful hurricane which the policy of Napoleon unloosed upon the Roman Church. When the Pope was carried away from Rome, he was exiled from Milan, and, in 1809, he was removed to France.

When the emperor gave the cardinals the

order to take part in the festivals and ceremonies of his marriage with Marie Louise, Dugnani, a pious, modest, and timid man, dared neither to brave the wrath of Napoleon nor to approve of this flagrant violation of all the laws of his religion. To escape participation, he asserted that he was ill and took to his bed. Thus he did not array himself with the thirteen who braved the emperor's wrath and he did not share their disgrace; his property was not confiscated; he was not obliged to discard the purple and dress in the costume of a simple priest; he was not one of the *black* cardinals.

When Napoleon sent five cardinals to Savona on the mission of inducing Pius VII to ratify the decisions of the National Council, Dugnani was a member of the delegation. He was known to be weak and inclined to follow closely the sentiments of Cardinal Roverella, who had ranged himself on the side of the French government. The delegation persuaded the Sovereign Pontiff. Later, at Fontainebleau, Dugnani is found among the advisers who led the Pope to sign a new Concordat.

Finally, the course of events inspired firmness in the least courageous. The Pope had retracted the consent which he had given to the Concordat of Fontainebleau. The Sacred

NAPOLÉON.

EMPEREUR DES FRANÇAIS.

Né le 16 Août 1769.

College, recently divided, now agreed in encouraging Pius VII to resist. Dugnani himself was suspected. The police became concerned in regard to his speeches and actions. Spies investigated to see why this cardinal kept his servant continually on the road between Paris and Fontainebleau.

The Pope was sent to Italy and the cardinals were scattered through several towns of the south of France. This is why Cardinal Dugnani, accompanied by a brigadier of gendarmes, arrived in Brignoles the day after Pius VII had passed through it.

By temperament, as we have seen, Dugnani was not the man to cause embarrassment to the authorities; besides, everything seemed to predict the approaching fall of the empire. Therefore we must believe in the report of the sub-prefect of Brignoles, declaring that the conduct of the cardinal could not give rise to any reproach. "His Eminence," added the official, "is familiar only with the priests of the region and has only been visited by a few persons whose sentiments in regard to the government can give birth to no suspicion. His Eminence assists regularly at divine service, but only as a simple priest. He says mass in his apartment with closed doors on every Sun-

day and saint's day, but no outsider is allowed to enter" (Note 12).

It seems likely, in addition, that exile did not weigh too heavily on the shoulders of Dugnani, for the order to release the cardinals was signed April 9, 1814, and Cardinal Pacca found Dugnani still at Brignoles when he passed through there two weeks later.

When he returned to Rome, our cardinal was made bishop of Porto and Santa Ruffina. He died in 1818. The Ambrosian Library preserves a manuscript which he wrote in remembrance of Maria Gaetana Agnesi, a celebrated mathematician of the eighteenth century, author of a "Treatise on the Differential Calculus and the Integral Calculus."

I would like to be able to call forth in the old house of the Rue Notre Dame a less mournful shade than that of the "good cardinal" Dugnani. But from this excursion through the Brignoles of the First Empire, I brought back at least the memory of a curious home and the two letters of the curate Jujardy.

II

The Ladies of La Celle

Half a league from Brignoles, at the foot of a steep rock, in the hollow of a little valley, stood the convent of La Celle. There remain of it only a few half-ruined structures which were long since changed, some into habitations, others into farm buildings; but these fragments of the monastery still retain an austere and moving aspect.

The galleries of the cloister, low and gloomy, open upon the meadow by a few narrow openings like great loopholes; they were provided with columns on only one side of the quadrilateral. The vault of the chapter room is supported by two clumsy pillars whose only ornament is a few rude and barbarous designs carved in the stone of the capitals. A great vaulted hall, almost dark, served perhaps as granary or cellar. Nowhere do we find a trace of decoration. The harshness of the light and the howling of the mistral increase the sadness of this picture.

No setting could be more suitable, if we desire to evoke a picture of the secluded and miserable existence of a few anchorites, worn out with prayer and penitence. To make this impression still more tragic, a terrifying crucifix is hung in the little Romanesque church. Agony is there painted upon the face of Christ with such refinement of horror that this proverb runs in Provence: "Ugly as the good God of La Celle."

Visitors are sometimes mystified when they listen with too much credulity to what is told them about these old stones.

This is what I learned about the monastery of La Celle: in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the first sisters were doubtless pious and regular nuns; but, one day Satan passed through the valley of Carami and breathed among the recluses less austere thoughts. For more than two centuries this convent became a veritable academy of gallantry for the most noble daughters of Provence, so that in the middle of the seventeenth century it became absolutely requisite to re-establish the rule and transfer the nuns to Aix.

This story, which was told me in the midst of the little Romanesque cloister, had a peculiar savor: the contrast was so unexpected! They

showed me the cell of the prior; for there was a prior in this convent of women. They also showed me the great enclosure where each nun had a little house built for herself, there to live according to her fancy in the company of whomsoever should please her. Naturally, I desired to know the adventures of the ladies of La Celle. They told me I would find at Aix in the Mejanes Library all the documents necessary to satisfy my curiosity.

* * *

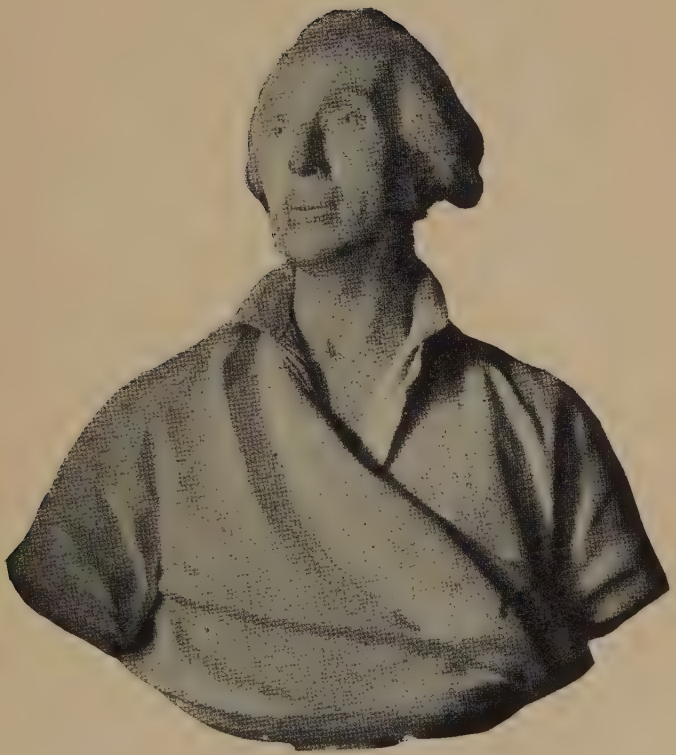
So once more I have revisited Aix, its squares, its fountains, its sycamores and its mansions. Aix, city of the "living past," Aix whose sad and seductive beauty could only be described by Monsieur Henri de Régnier.

Whoever is sensitive to the nobility of classic architecture, to the grace of gushing waters, and to the magnificence of Latin inscriptions, should make this town his retreat and his delight. There is not upon the soil of France any work of art which is more complete and more harmonious. Here we do not breathe that atmosphere of a sepulchre and a museum which so quickly renders intolerable a sojourn in dead cities. This one is only half decayed.

It continues to live, but in a slower measure; it has lost its splendor, and taken on melancholy. It grows old in silence.

It is an inviolable silence, to which the people of Aix should have the wisdom to resign themselves. They will work in vain; they will never again hear the noise of modern things in their midst. They recently desired to possess tramways, and their enterprise was censured. But these tramways miraculously roll noiselessly; they could not conquer the silence of Aix. They are poor little tramways, discreet and taciturn; one would say that they are aware of the fact that they roll in vain, and endeavor to ask pardon for their incongruous presence.

I have already tried to describe the delicate pleasure of a promenade through the streets of Aix. But, every time that I return here, I have the joy of new discoveries—at the end of a garden, under curtains of ivy, an old fountain surmounted by a Neptune; in a square, over a door, the mysterious and charming smile of a mask of a shepherdess; a sombre chapel, which is the meeting place of the brotherhood of grey penitents, vowed to the burial of the poor; in the salon of a magnificent mansion, a beautiful lady by Nattier; at a bend in the street, the vista of a campanile crowned with



BUST OF MARQUIS DE MÉJANES, BY HOUDON.

exquisite wroughtiron. There is no one, even among the inhabitants of Aix, who can boast that he knows all the treasures, all the memories, and all the aspects of this city.

Today, without any strolling, let us go to the Méjanes Library; let us salute the bust of Méjanes by Houdon, which is certainly one of the masterpieces of the sculptor; let us give a glance at the superb cupboards carved by Toro, and let us return to the ladies of La Celle.

They had told me the truth. After a few hours passed at Méjanes, I knew the story of the strange monastery and how it was reformed in 1650 (Note 13).

*

* *

Benedictine monks settled at La Celle after the Saracen invasions; but, about the second half of the twelfth century, they transferred the place to nuns who were also vowed to the rule of St. Benedict, and who constructed a little convent, surrounded by a wall. The prior, who was a monk of the abbey of Saint Victor at Marseilles, retained a portion of the jurisdiction over the nuns.

The priory of La Celle set an example of all the virtues, it is said, until the fourteenth

century; but one day disorder entered the holy house. At the end of a century, the nuns, who had formerly numbered more than a hundred, reduced their number to forty and then to twenty-four; this was for the purpose of increasing the income of each one. In addition, they no longer had either rule or seclusion. On May 20, 1538, King Francis I, accompanied by the queen, the duchess of Étampes, several cardinals, two hundred gentlemen, and six thousand men at arms, halted at Brignoles; the people erected arches of triumph garnished with flowers; they cried *Vivo Franco!* as he passed through; they offered him boxes of plums, and they danced in his honor the volte and the martingale; finally, they offered him the spectacle of a "morality," in which the Demoiselles de Vintimille d'Ollioules and de Castellane de Daluis vied with each other in grace: they were two nuns of La Celle.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the nuns lived as did the worldly, and were distinguished "by the colors of their petticoats and the names of their lovers." Men or women, everybody could enter the monastery and everybody could leave it. The nuns dressed as they pleased; only they wore a black ribbon instead of a scapular, and, under their

FRANCIS I.

elegant headdresses, they concealed a little veil of silk net. In the orchard of the monastery they had constructed twenty-four pavilions—each had her own. The cell of the prioress was a great house built "in worldly style"; her "study" was hung with gilded leather; one saw there precious furniture, "with all that one could desire for the comfort of a house." When the reform of La Celle was decided upon, the "official" sent by the archbishop came to make an inventory of the convent, and pavilion by pavilion, described the halls hung with high-warp tapestry, and bedchambers with walls covered with "bergame" (a coarse tapestry). Each nun had her servant and received her relatives or her friends at supper. The prior took part in all these festivities. The obligation to go to the choir each day and there hurry through a few psalms was the single slight task of this free and amiable existence. So one inevitably thinks of the way of living of the Thelemites, for "their whole life was passed not in accordance with laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their will and free choice."

There were twenty-four nuns in the monastery, belonging to the first families of Provence (Jeanne de Castellane Dalmas, Honorade de

Grasse de Cabrière, Marguerite de Mounier, Véronique de Clapier, Dame de Blacas d'Aups, Dame de Castellane de Montmeyan, etc. . . .), when the queen, Cardinal Mazarin and Cardinal Grimaldi agreed to recall them to "strict observance." The prioress, Lucrèce de Barras de La Roubine, belonged to a very noble family, since, on the testimony of the most celebrated of her illegitimate children, Paul de Barras, a member of the Convention, her family was as old as the rocks of Provence.

Two nuns had continued to live according to rule, in the midst of the intrigues and scandals of which their community was the scene.

The first was named Madame Lemaistre de Beaumont; from her novitiate, she had shown a great disgust for dissipation and free living, and, when she had to pronounce her vows . . . but I prefer to transcribe here the edifying and subtle relation of the historian to the convent: "She desired, for the safety of her conscience, to specify when she pronounced her vows that it was *following the customs of the house;* but when she wished to write out these vows, she forgot to add that it was *following the customs of the house:* when she had perceived this omission, she began to write it over again, but she again happened to forget this article; she re-

sumed her task the third time without being able to do better than on the first two occasions; at this point they came to tell her that the Comte de Moret, abbot of the monastery, and her relatives and other persons of consideration awaited her in the church for the ceremony and that she could remember in pronouncing her vows that it was *following the customs of the house* without it being necessary to have it written down. She went to the church with this intention, but the good God, who destined her to reform this house, permitted her to forget what she had planned and on the contrary she had, when she pronounced her vows, a sincere desire to practise them in all their rigidity. . . ." These miraculous omissions, these providential lapses of memory permitted Madame Lemaistre de Beaumont not to follow "the customs" of the monastery. She did not suffer men to enter her house; she received them only in the parlor with veil lowered, which was not following, as a matter of fact, the usages of La Celle.

The second of the reformers was Madame Marie de Croze. She took the veil at sixteen and, at first, she conformed to the "customs of the house." She had beauty and talent. "I did not lack for lovers," she later wrote to her

director, "and I was sufficiently foolish to abandon my Divine Spouse to run after the criminal results which ordinarily accompany gallantry. I powdered myself, I curled, and I painted; and, what makes me still more culpable I went out of the monastery in this fashion, without paying attention to the danger in which I placed myself. I even permitted my portrait to be painted, dressed in these vanities, in which there appeared no mark of my profession save a little veil, of which the painter availed himself rather to cover a birthmark which I had upon my forehead than as a sign of my vows. . . ." Now, one day when she had exasperated her lover by a little too much strictness, he sent her a mysterious box. Madame de Croze believed that it was a present. To do it the proper honor, she called some of her friends and opened the box in their presence. She found there only the remedies which she customarily used "to cover her scar." She fell into a fainting fit and was ill a long time. The pious writer to whom we owe this story adds: "It was a mark of grace."

When she was well again, Madame de Croze entrusted the direction of her conscience to a priest celebrated for his piety and his good works, Monsieur d'Authier, bishop of Bethle-

hem. He had founded the Congregation of the Priests of the Holy Sacrament and often resided in the house at Brignoles, the first which he had founded. Having witnessed the disorders of La Celle, he also desired the reform of the convent.

On the day of the Immaculate Conception in the year 1643, the Holy Virgin appeared to Madame de Croze and encouraged her to re-establish the rule in her monastery; she showed herself at the same time to Monsieur d'Authier; and "there is every reason to believe that she showed the same grace to Madame Lemaistre de Beaumont"; but the latter never said anything of it to anybody.

The reformers set themselves to the task. Madame de Beaumont left her house and came to dwell in that of Madame de Croze. With two or three other nuns, they thus formed a little isolated community in the midst of the monastery. They went to the choir with the others; but, after the services, they practised retreat and silence; they abstained from meat, slept upon bags of straw and possessed nothing personally, for they had, according to the rule, put their incomes in the common fund.

These examples of monastic life exasperated the "old nuns." These devotees were already

turning the heads of some novices with their practice of penitence; besides, in Provence as in the rest of France in this time of religious rebirth, there was only too much talk of founding or reforming convents; there was therefore danger that the archbishop of Aix, Cardinal Grimaldi, would finally wish to take part in the affairs of La Celle.

The "old nuns" turned at first upon Monsieur d'Authier and forbade him to enter their convent. One day when he attempted this, they rushed upon him like furies and the holy man would not have escaped from their claws alive, "if he had not had the quick wit to leave his mantle in their hands as he took flight." On another occasion they went to Brignoles to his house and, as he was absent, forced his door and ransacked and removed his papers. Then came the turn of the reformers. One day, when they came out of matins, they were attacked, overwhelmed with blows and left for dead on the tiles of the cloister. At the same time, they were denounced and slandered to the superiors of the order, the Benedictines of Saint-Victor. The latter finally sent one of their members to La Celle. This commissary decreed that henceforth each nun in the convent should respect the liberty of her sisters. So, for thir-

CARDINAL GRIMALDI.

teen years, the devotees continued their mortifications and their prayers under the mocking or angry glances of their companions.

However, Monsieur d'Authier, who had gone to Paris, became interested in the experiences of his spiritual daughters. He obtained from Anne of Austria permission to have one of them come to Val de Grâce. Madame de Croze then secretly left the monastery.

When the denizens of La Celle learned that she was on the way to Paris, they realized their danger and, during the two years that Madame de Croze was absent, her friend, Madame Lemaistre de Beaumont, paid dearly for the uneasiness and sufferings of the community. They imprisoned her in her house; they deprived her of ink and of paper. Even her servant was not allowed to go out to market. Her provisions were delivered at the door of the convent where they were searched, for, on one occasion, a letter had been discovered hidden in a fig. She was reduced to writing with grass juice on little bits of linen which she concealed in the seams of a chemise; a trustworthy woman, who sometimes was admitted to visit her, wore this chemise away and was thus able to carry the messages of Madame de Beaumont to the people on the outside who

were interested in the matter of the reform. Becoming weary of such vexations, she demanded that she might have a hearing from her superiors. Again a commissary came to the convent, but one of the boarders was dressed as a nun and it was she who answered the questions, masquerading as Madame de Beaumont.

Madame de Croze had not lost her time at Paris; she had been received at Val de Grâce; she had seen the queen and described to her the worldly and scandalous life of the nuns of La Celle. In less than two years she had obtained an order that the community should henceforth be strictly submissive to the rule of Saint Benedict and be transferred from La Celle to Aix. A fortunate circumstance had furthered the aims of Madame de Croze. Among the twenty-two abbeys which belonged to Mazarin was that of Saint Victor de Marseille; Mazarin was therefore the real superior of the ladies of La Celle.

And it was he who, in unison with Anne of Austria, decided upon the reform and restored the customs and manners of the monastery to their primitive austerity. The ways of Providence are inscrutable.

Mazarin wrote to the archbishop of Aix, Mon-

ANNE OF AUSTRIA AND CARDINAL MAZARIN.

seigneur Grimaldi, to recommend that he should cause an inventory of the convent and an interrogatory of the nuns to be undertaken. Monseigneur Grimaldi, in obedience to these instructions, sent an official to La Celle. The nuns incited the people of the village to a riot and the official was obliged to decamp. However, it was made evident to the bellicose Lucrèce de Barras de La Roubine that there was danger in prolonging her resistance; the time of the Fronde had passed; the authority of the king was no longer a dead letter. When they returned to La Celle, the delegates of the archbishop were admitted to the convent, and the nuns led them to the choir, singing "the hymn and the responses of Saints Perpetua and Felicity, titulary virgins of the church." They questioned the prioress. She made strenuous complaints in regard to Madame de Croze, who had been absent from the convent for more than twenty months without permission, and protested that the community never failed in an office, was strictly cloistered, gave charity to the poor, lived in perfect harmony. Then the envoy drew up a complete inventory of the buildings and the furnishings.

The archbishop rendered his decision on October 29, 1658. The king signed the letters

patent. When these letters were presented to the Grand Council to be registered, the ladies of La Celle again tried to defend themselves. But Monsieur d'Authier was a resourceful man; he succeeded in having the affair referred to the Parliament of Provence. Now, at this very time, the king, Anne of Austria, and Mazarin had come to Aix to pacify the province and to put an end to the last traces of insurrection on the part of a few members of Parliament. In such circumstances the affair of La Celle was quickly decided as the queen wished.

Besides, the court seemed to take a special interest in the reform of the monastery. When she came to Brignoles, the queen summoned Madame de Beaumont before her and congratulated her on her courage. At Aix, she went more than once to sew with Madame de Croze, who, since her return from Paris, lived with the Visitandines. Finally, she desired that the contract establishing the reform should be executed in her presence. She "showed so much zealousness in this affair that she rested the elbow of her arm upon the shoulder of Monsieur Darbes, the notary, while he was writing the document, to oversee how he did it."

The reformers attributed their success to

the piety of the "holy" queen; but the policy of Mazarin was not without its effect. The ladies of La Celle belonged, as we have seen, to the most ancient families of Provence. Doubtless, the minister was not displeased to mortify this intractable nobility.

The reformed community then took up its quarters at Aix; at first it rented a house, then took up quarters "at the court," and, in 1685, had a great monastery built, which was demolished only twenty years ago and replaced by the buildings of the Lycée. The plan for this had been drawn up by Madame de Beaumont, who became Mother Angélique, after the reform.

The convent of La Celle was then abandoned. The allowances of the nuns who refused to submit to the strict observance and to remove to Aix, passed into the possession of the new community. The pretty houses, furnished and decorated "in the secular manner," fell into ruins. Soon there no longer remained a single vestige of the free life which the beautiful and gallant Benedictines had led there. Thelema had disappeared. There remained, invaded by briars and fig trees, only the massive and sombre remains of the old Romanesque monastery.

CHAPTER VII

FROM LE LUC TO LE THORONET

LE LUC.—Tiny irregular open spaces where, under enormous sycamores, flows a tiny fountain, whose rusted iron clamps scarcely hold together the tottering urn and the disjointed curbs; crooked streets which suddenly end in the open country and whose last tumble-down shanties frame a vista of cypresses, almonds, and mountain peaks; ruinous façades, worm-eaten and tottering; flights of steps strewn with gravel, and rugged slopes which form a maze on the flank of the hillside, under arches and flying buttresses; higher up, its ruins hardly distinguishable from the rocks, a tumble-down château which is but a pile of grey stones; such is a hamlet in Provence. Le Luc is its perfect type.

Its château bears a fantastic and mysterious name: *le Pigeonnier des Masques*—the Dovecote of the Masks. In truth, its round tower appears to be the remnants of a dovecote; but I have not wished to know anything more about

it. It is wisdom never to ask why a name is delightful, especially in that Provence which owes its prestige to the admirable falsehood of words and light.

From the Dovecote of the Masks, among the pink and white bouquets of blossoming fruit trees, beyond the ash-grey tiles, the sycamores and the belfries of Le Luc, beyond the immense plain where cypresses point to heaven and where sleepy brooks mirror them, we perceive with a sweeping glance the Mountains of the Moors unrolling the chain of their blue summits across the whole width of the heavens, without a single disproportionate peak to interrupt the broad, strong, and harmonious rhythm of these admirable lines.

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The Valley of the Argens.—This is one of those delightful oases, which we often discover in bitter and burning Provence. Living and sinuous, the little river runs through the hollow of a narrow valley between hills covered with shrubs and clumps of trees. On both banks great distorted trees make ramparts of shade and coolness. In this month of March, their fine, leafless branches waver in the wind, so

white and so delicate that from afar one would take them to be a morning mist floating above the Argens.

In any case, nature here does not have the sadness we ascribe to things in winter. The slopes of the valley are covered with pines, to which the purity of the light imparts a delicate grace which we never see in them under a northern sky. Around the trunks and the branches despoiled of their foliage by the season, vigorous ivies entwine. The willows are already turning green and the earth clothes itself with violets.

When we ascend the charming valley, we soon find ourselves before one of the most celebrated landscapes of Provence—the natural bridges of the Argens. At this point the river formerly disappeared in a long underground channel, the greater part of which has now fallen in. These masses of rock through which the Argens flows and boils form a singularly picturesque landscape. Here we may behold arches, grottos, stalactites and cascades. In one of the excavations of the gorge there has been carved a curious chapel which, according to the legends, dates from the time of the Saracens. (Everything is Saracen in this part of Provence, the traditions, the ruins and often also the flame

which blazes from the depths of black eyes.

This is one of those spots which ravish popular imagination by their strangeness, and which should be guarded with as jealous care as a work of art. Yet it has just been stupidly defiled.

At the very spot where the Argens hurls itself into the midst of these shattered and tragic rocks, engineers have installed a power station to produce electricity and send it to the town of Toulon. It is this building which now closes one of the entrances of the gorge. To construct it, it was necessary to cut down a group of magnificent trees. At the other end of the defile, the engineers have constructed a dam which has civilized the appearance of the landscape and controlled the course of the Argens. To be sure, they have not touched the extraordinary chaos in the midst of which the torrent has worn its path, but this is now no more than a "natural curiosity," isolated between a power station and a dam. . . .

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Le Thoronet.—After leaving the Argens, the country becomes rough and stony. The road lifts from hilltop to hilltop through woods of

pines. The mistral, which entered the narrow valley only in short gusts, blows in gales upon the heights. The view stretches to the horizon across all Provence and, in the blazing light, the mountains roll away, dark and blue, to the snows of the Alps, which mark the extreme horizon with a white wreath.

Long stretches of lonesomeness without house or cultivation; a poor and half-deserted village; sparse vegetation upon a red soil; then, abruptly, at the edge of a ravine, more sheltered and more wooded, a little pointed stone steeple above a group of trees; the road enters by a breach between a barn and a church into a courtyard planted with chestnut trees: it is the old abbey of Le Thoronet.

It is said that it was founded by Saint Bernard and was at first called Notre Dame de Floriéyes. Its origin is obscure, but its architecture does not allow us to doubt that it dates from the twelfth century.

It was rich and powerful in the Middle Ages; yet its past is not illustrated by legends. None of its monks distinguished himself by his holiness or his talents. One of its first abbots, named Christian, "departed toward the skies, according to the chronicle, full of virtues or of merits," but others think that this Christian

never governed the monks of Le Thoronet. In the thirteenth century, the son of a merchant of Marseilles, Foulques, who, against the will of his family, had become a troubadour, and whom the trade of a poet had led into great excesses, cloistered himself in a Cistercian monastery, and was later appointed abbot of Le Thoronet. That is the only reward of the historians who have investigated the history of the convent.

In the fifteenth century, the rule was relaxed at Le Thoronet, as well as in other monasteries of France. In the severe architecture of the old abbey, the modern monks resigned themselves to a life of peaceable retreat, without hardships or excessive privations. They built a less sombre and less austere refectory; the old dormitory was divided into cells, and some one who has thumbed over the housekeeper's books has found this there: "The table was set with plates of faience, with carafes of white glass, with goblets of the same; it was served with meat, fowl of all kinds, game, sea fish, and river fish, cheese, apples and pears from the mountains, oranges, melons and figs from Salernes, chestnuts, plums from Digne, dried grapes, vegetables, black and white shell beans, string beans, onions from La Garde Freinet, gourmand peas, etc. . . . If brothers were

lacking, the servants were plentiful: 625 livres were necessary to pay the muleteers, the laborers, the waiters, the butcher, the cook, the scullion, the gardener, the hunter. . . . The prior was presented with a snuff grinder" (Note 14).

And thus lived, until 1789, a few inoffensive bachelors occupied in administering their property, prosecuting their lawsuits, singing their services and decorating their church. Saint Bernard would perhaps not have been able to recognize them as his spiritual sons.

The last commendatory abbot of Le Thoronet was Agésilas Gaston de Grossoles de Flamarens. There is in the court of the convent an eighteenth-century fountain whose ruined panels are half invisible under sheets of water; it is exquisite in its grace and age, but seems still more charming when one knows that it was constructed in this place by Monsieur Agésilas Gaston de Grossoles de Flamarens.

The former offices of the convent are now no more than ruins. Their roofs crumbled long ago. Trees and ivy grow through the old apartments of the abbot's home, where one may still see remnants of a fine Louis Quinze decoration with which the stucco workers clothed the rough walls of the old edifice and the ribs of its

stone vaults. Farther on, the barns of the convent have half fallen, but the cellar built at the ground level remains intact, with its racks and its wine-presses. Fragments still mark the position of other buildings which have disappeared. All this part of the monastery has been abandoned since the Revolution. There is interest in preserving—and restoring—only the church and the cloister.

In an article on Le Thoronet published in 1846 one may read: "Here the parts which were rescued from destruction are as complete as on the day when they left the hand of the architect. . . . It is hoped that this article may arouse the interest of the State. Every friend of the arts would applaud the decision which would set aside an appropriation for the preservation of the church and the cloister. It is necessary only to repair the roof of this monument and to preserve it from the infiltration of water. This work will be neither long nor costly and, if it is attempted, this same monument will brave centuries as long as those which it has already defied" (Note 15). The "friends of the arts" still had to wait more than thirty years. During this time the roof continued to deteriorate and, when the "interest of the State" was finally aroused, the

architect Revoil did not content himself with the work of preservation which was all that was necessary.

This cloister of Le Thoronet, in its wholly Cistercian simplicity, is one of the most successful works of Provençal Romanesque. The low arcades which light the gallery, their clumsy columns, their naked arched vaults, their heavy arches, their unornamented columns, this bare and savage whole draws its entire beauty from its plan and its lines. Now, despite the steepness of the site, despite the inequality of the four galleries, this plan is incomparably satisfactory, these lines are irresistibly seducing. Not a single incongruity in decoration, unless it is in the chapter hall, where two capitals show a few strong carvings. And we are also enchanted by the justness of the proportions and the sureness of the design of a little structure standing in the garden of the cloister and communicating with the south gallery; this little hexagonal building was the monk's lavatory, and the remnants of the sink lie on the earth.

The old church presents, in all its purity, the special plan adopted by the order of Citeaux. It consists of three naves, a transept, and five apses. The two lateral naves have the pecu-

THE CLOISTER OF LE THORONET.

liarity that, having semi-cradle vaults, they served to take the thrust of the principal nave; the five apses are side by side, and two subsidiary apses open into each arm of the transept. It is this which the "restoration" has destroyed. The abbots of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had transformed the ancient Romanesque church in accordance with the taste of their time. They had placed in it marbles, stucco, statues, grilles, and gilding. Of all this decoration, nothing remains. Everything has been sacrificed to unity of style. (The only traces which remain are a few vestiges of painting in one of the minor apses.) And now the structure, empty and frozen, is no more than an archaeological curiosity; it has the dryness and the commonplaceness of a plate drawn to illustrate a manual of architecture; it is the theoretical scheme of a Cistercian church.

Imbecile visitors have felt it necessary to inscribe their names in enormous letters on these sad and naked walls, and these barbarous *sgraffiti* are the only ornaments of the secularized and restored church.

Before this soulless monument, reduced to the state of a document, one thinks with anger that a like fate awaits most of the churches of France, if the Chambers presently accept the

silly and barbarous law which the Jacobins have drawn up. Such a spectacle today is a sad awakening for any one who appreciates the worth of the admirable religious monuments which are scattered through all the provinces of France. The deserted nave of Le Thoronet sadly predicts to me the frightful disasters which anticlerical fury has already cost us and will yet cost us.

How many ruins have already accumulated! The monks and nuns have been driven from their monasteries. Their goods are in the hands of business men, whose only thought is to live as comfortably as possible from the liquidation: and, as convents are a sort of property which it is difficult to sell, they are reduced to pulling them to pieces and selling them at retail; one day, they auction off the wood carvings; the next day, the statues; a little later, the tiles or slates of the roof. In the parish churches, the simple threat of separation has been the single and irreparable damage. Junk dealers have come from every part of Europe to work upon the fear of the clergy, and have purchased the plate, the ornaments, the statues, the pictures, telling the country curates that all these things are soon to be seized by the agents of the State. . . .

Classification as historic monuments might have been an obstacle to this pillage. But, since 1887, when the law regarding historic monuments was passed, there have not yet been listed a quarter of the works of art contained in the churches of France! Today it is too late (Note 16).

March 24, 1905.

CHAPTER VIII

LÉRINS

WHILE the tireless gusts rattle our window-panes, I am distracting myself by reading a bulky volume in which Monsieur Henri Moris, a learned delver in archives, has set down the history of the holiest and the most illustrious of the abbeys of Provence, the abbey of Lérins (Note 17). It is a magnificent history in which holy legends and tales of war alternate; but today it has that special charm of bringing back to remembrance a marvelous country bathed in brilliant sunlight.

The last time that I visited the Isle of Saint Honorat—it was in the month of March—a stinging gale blew from the north, and the little steamboat which gives communication with the isles of Lérins bobbed upon the crests of the short waves which fled from the strand of La Napoule toward the open sea. From the sky, swept clean by the mistral, a blazing light fell upon the villas and gardens of Cannes,

upon the olives on the amphitheatre of hills, upon the snowy summits of the Alps. White-caps tossed up by the wind sparkled in every direction upon the deep violet blue of the sea. Far away the red porphyries of the Estérel were girdled with a fringe of silver surf.

When the boat had entered the strait which lies like a tranquil and transparent lake between the two islands, sheltered by the woods and hills of Sainte Marguérite, we left the gale behind and then Saint Honorat appeared, showing, through the softness of an almost spring-like air, the white buildings of its convent, the yellowed stones of its fortress, which defied all the corsairs of the Mediterranean for so many centuries, its strange pinetum whose sloping and twisted branches seemed to strive toward the sea like the monstrous serpents which the miracle of Saint Honorat put to flight, when the anchorite entered this isle infested with reptiles. . . .

To the memories of a pleasant journey let us add a few notes on history and archaeology, which the work of Monsieur Moris is going to furnish us. No one knows better than he the chronicle and the monuments of the abbey of Lérins. He has published its cartulary, and he

has described with much taste all the beauty of the "blue country."

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Nothing is more diverting than an old book of travels. It reveals to us in a direct and charming fashion the tastes of the men of earlier days, what they went to seek out and admire when their fancy moved them to travel away from their homes. We compare their impressions with our own, we find them a bit childish, a bit ridiculous, and, as they do not get angry if we smile at their sayings, they are delightful companions for a promenade. Then, in telling us about monuments which have disappeared and landscapes which the forces of nature or the caprices of human industry have changed, the old accounts of travels furnish an agreeable play to the imagination.

In several places Monsieur Moris quotes a very curious pamphlet which was published two years ago under this title: *Un voyage en felouque de Saint-Tropez à Gênes* (Note 18). It is the story of a journey, made in the second fortnight of April in the year 1687, by two ladies and two gentlemen of Aix—the Councillor Du Thomassin Mazaugues, his wife, the lat-

ter's sister-in-law, Madame de Pierrerue, and Monsieur de Mauvans, a priest, secretary of the expedition. They embarked at Saint Tropez and ended at Genoa, having coasted the shores of Provence and Liguria, where they made several landings. It thus happened that they went ashore at the isles of Lérins. Let us neglect the other interruptions to their voyage; this alone interests us today.

After they went ashore at Sainte Marguerite, they ascended to the fortress to obtain a "ticket of permission" which would allow them to enter the tower of Saint Honorat. As they passed, they read the proud inscription which the Spanish general, Don Miguel Perez, had caused to be engraved above the door of the citadel fifty years before, when he had surrendered the place to the Comte d'Harcourt. They laughed over it, finding it still more Spanish in its "conception" than in its terms. "You see," says Monsieur de Mauvans, "how pleasant the Spanish can find their defeats, because of the need of glossing over their panic and their lack of courage." To tell the truth, Monsieur de Mauvans forgot that in 1637 the Spaniards had made a fine defence of the fortress of Sainte Marguerite and that, if they had not been abandoned by their fleet, they could

have held the little army of the Comte d'Harcourt at bay for a long time. (In Monsieur Moris's work there is a lively description of this military episode.) We should not be astonished at the naïve fanfaronade of the priest of Aix, because in those happy days men took great pride in the name "Frenchman."

Three days previously, an unknown prisoner had been incarcerated in a cell near the Governor's room, for the latter was to be the only jailer whom he might see. This mysterious person had been informed—as Monsieur de Mauvans tells us—that "whenever he should be tired of life, he had only to mention his name, for orders had been given to shoot him through the head immediately." This is the way in which legends are born. How many travelers have since then gone ashore at Sainte Marguerite for the sole purpose of getting acquainted with the walls behind which this same unknown lived! Even Joanne says, in speaking of the fort: "This is a building which has little interest in itself and which would not be worth a visit, if one could not see there the dungeon in which was immured the Man in the Iron Mask, that victim of Louis XIV."

The travelers passed over to the isle of Saint Honorat, furnished with their "ticket of per-

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

mission," and their first care was their supper. It is necessary to quote the following lines, for they make a whole picture:

"We still had time to sup upon the beautiful green sod with which this isle is almost completely covered. Afterward, I was chosen to go to their tower to warn the monks of the illustrious guests whom they were to have that night, in order that they might have some beds prepared for them. They were scattered throughout the isle amusing themselves with hunting and, as soon as they had heard the news, they did not delay to come in troops to salute the ladies. After the ordinary compliments, they conducted the company into their house, which one may say was as much a place of arms and tumult as a home of piety and retreat. The monastery, in fact, has been half converted into a citadel, and the soldiers dwell there under the same roof as the monks. It is true that the latter have for their portion the most comfortable and roomy portion of the establishment and that the soldiery, which is a detachment from the garrison of Sainte Marguerite, occupies only the lesser half of the northern tower."

Thus we learn that at the end of the seventeenth century the conventual buildings and

the mediaeval church were already abandoned, and that the community, then much reduced, lodged entirely in the fortress, which was originally built for time of war. The interior of this abbey-fortress had undergone alterations of which it is difficult today to form an idea in the half-ruined edifice. Monsieur de Mauvans described with admiration the staircase, which was most beautiful and which went from the base to the summit of the building; a very pretty cloister adorned by some ancient columns; an admirable cistern for the common use of the garrison and the monks; a refectory for visitors and another for the monks. On the third story, he sees a great cloister with a chapel at each of the four corners. From the cloister he enters the church, "which is a masterpiece" —the choir possesses fifty stalls for the monks, and, behind a grille near the high altar, there are arranged shrines of gold and silver which contain the bodies of the saints and martyrs of Lérins. From the sacristy, which possesses a ceiling in "modern style," Monsieur de Mauvans passes "through a sort of parlor" into the monks' dormitory. The apartments of the elders and the officers of the monastery face the south; their ceilings are *all gilded, with rare paintings;* farther on is the library, rich in

ancient manuscripts, and then very comfortable apartments for guests. In the upper story are found "other chambers, a very large hall where there is a billiard table, and whence one can perceive a part of the isles which stretch far out into the Mediterranean." (What can be the islands which Monsieur de Mauvans discovered from the platform of the château of Saint Honorat? Evidently they showed him Corsica, as they do everybody, and he, like everybody, had the politeness to declare that he saw it; but, for the sake of correct geography, he might have abstained from that.)

The same evening the monks wished to give a feast to the guests, "and a butler, who carries his body as stiffly as if he had swallowed all the halberds of the garrison, brought the dishes and served the wines. The pleasing manner in which he made courtesies, by doubling himself like a jack-knife and spinning around on one foot, diverted the company extremely. Finally they gave beds to the new guests, but there was a difficulty in respect to the ladies. It was impossible to allow them to enter through the monks' dormitory, and it appeared that it was much less inconvenient to put them to bed in the sacristy than in one of

the adjoining chambers. So these gentlemen had beds erected there with extreme diligence."

On the following morning the company embarked, after having breakfast in this hospitable monastery.

This little unpretentious account puts before our eyes the peaceful existence led, toward the end of the seventeenth century, by a few monks assembled in a comfortable château under an indulgent rule. The thick walls of the ancient fortress defended their cloisters against the gusts of the northern wind, and the heats of the dog days. They fasted whenever they ate in the conventual refectory, but Monsieur de Mauvans assures us that this refectory was closed four days a week. They had enormous leisure, a magnificent outlook before their eyes, an admirable library ready to their hand; they played billiards and shot quail; sometimes a delightful company disembarking from a felucca gave them the unexpected pleasure of asking their hospitality, and then they set up beds in the sacristy for the charming visitors. If there were a few strenuous souls among them, they had, to satisfy themselves, the haughty pleasure of struggling without cessation for the rights of Lérins, against the claims of the

MONSIEUR DE VAUBAN.

bishop of Grasse, the eternal enemy of their monastery.

I would like to quote one more reflection of the tourists of 1687 in regard to the Château of Saint Honorat, because the same thought often comes to our minds, even today, before the beautiful monuments of the south of France: "You may be sure that if this country (Italy), as marvelous as it is, possessed a building of this kind, the Italians would have numbered it among their most beautiful curiosities, *but the French continually neglect what they themselves possess.* Monsieur de Vauban, however, to whom nothing in the way of fortification or architecture could appear grand or surprising, he who refines all things, he who has so thoroughly remedied the defects of his predecessors, declared, when he saw this tower, that it was a true masterpiece, and that it would not be possible to add anything to the order and the industry of whosoever had drawn up its plans. Here is what one sees at the very borders of Italy."

Let us add this testimony to all those that we have already assembled, in order to prove that the men of the seventeenth century were not always blind to the beauty of mediaeval architecture.

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The decay of Lérins continued during the whole eighteenth century. The bishops of Grasse dreamed of joining the revenues of the abbey to their episcopal income. The monks themselves demanded the secularization of the monastery, for discords and rivalry rendered life in common intolerable. Finally, in 1787, Monseigneur de Jarente, bishop of Orleans, deposed the commendatory abbot of Lérins from his position, and in the following year the canonical suppression of the abbey was decreed and confirmed by the Council of State. No more than four monks remained in the convent, and they separated. The Revolution did not have to suppress the monastery of Lérins, but it caused the sale of the Isle of Saint Honorat, its forest and its buildings, in 1791.

After that time the former monastery passed through the hands of various owners. If we desire to know in what state the buildings were forty years later, we may read Mérimée who, in the early part of the reign of Louis Philippe, was sent on an archaeological inspection of the south of France, by the minister of the Interior.

The outside of the fortress presented almost the same appearance as at the time when Mon-

sieur de Mauvans and his companions had stopped there. Mérimée admired especially the beautiful cut stone of which the edifice is constructed, "well put together and of a yellow tint which contrasts admirably with the deep blue of the Mediterranean and of the heavens of Provence." It is in fact impossible to land at Saint Honorat without being struck by this marvelous contrast of colors.

Mérimée described the little square court which occupies the center of the keep, like the *patio* of an Arab house, and the six unequal and rudely chiselled antique columns which sustain the arches of the cloister. The chapels and the living quarters had already suffered much from the ravages of time. It was, however, still possible to distinguish some of the ancient arrangements, and not every trace of the elegant decoration created by the monks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had disappeared. "In the upper stories, a great number of chambers, some ornamented in the taste of the Renaissance, and others more modern, prove that the inhabitants of this place must have worked there during a long period of time. Everywhere a multitude of concealed staircases, of corridors which cross in curious fashion, of underground passages communicat-

ing with the upper stories, give the idea of a château of Ann Radcliffe or an edifice which might have been built expressly for playing hide-and-seek. . . . Some chambers are still papered in the style of the eighteenth century, and several doorheads show painted shepherds and shepherdesses in the style of Van Loo, a decoration which one does not expect to find among monks. . . .'' Nothing of this now remains. Twenty years ago, I remember that I saw a few traces of frescoes and paintings which seemed to date from the eighteenth century. But, since then, walls have fallen, vaultings have crumbled, and the architects of the Bureau of Historic Monuments have undertaken works of consolidation, which were possibly indispensable, but which effaced the very last traces of the old decorations.

In the interior of the island, some distance from the fortress, which rose at the edge of the sea, stood the buildings of the primitive convent. Mérimée was able to see and describe the cloister, which was almost intact, and the church, which was only half ruined. The latter edifice was divided into three naves; the pillars were standing, but the ruins of the fallen vault encumbered the principal nave. The apse had been destroyed. Under the leaves of an enor-

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE.

mous ivy which clothed the principal front, could be distinguished old sculptures, some Christian and others pagan, built into the facing of the wall.

Here everything is totally changed since Mérimée's day. In 1871, Cistercians from Senanque established themselves in the Isle of Saint Honorat, under the leadership of Father Marie Bernard, and re-erected the ancient abbey of Lérins. They then constructed a new monastery around the cloister, which they only restored, for they respected the rude and sombre galleries, the almost barbaric vaultings without rib or arris, the thick walls pierced with narrow and irregular windows. Unfortunately, they did not show the same piety toward the remnants of the Romanesque church. They demolished its ruins in order to build a new church in which the architect has tried to reproduce faithfully the plan and the style of the ancient edifice. . . . In charity, let us say no more.

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All the modern historians of Lérins have passed on, enlivening it with their conjectures, an anecdote in which an amiable *comedienne*

of the eighteenth century played a rather mysterious part. Monsieur Moris has related it, but without dwelling strongly upon it, for what we know certainly about it is very little.

At the time of the Revolution, the Isle of Saint Honorat, being sold at auction, was acquired for the sum of 37,000 francs by Jean Honoré Alziary, nephew of Dom Alziary, the last treasurer of the monastery. Now this Jean Honoré Alziary was the father of two actresses who, under the name of Mesdemoiselles Sainval, appeared on the stage of the Comédie Française with unequal success.

The elder had made her début in a brilliant fashion, in 1776, but her career had been suddenly interrupted by the great success of Mademoiselle Vestris, who deprived her of all her parts. She had in vain attempted to defend herself in a memoir which she published, but her name was removed from the rolls of the Comédie by an order of the king, and she was reduced to playing on provincial stages.

The younger made her first appearance at Copenhagen at the age of sixteen. She was soon admitted to the Comédie Française, where she played the part of Alzire. Her voice was touching, her delivery pure, and her conduct decent. The old frequenters of the pit imag-

ined that they saw again one of the dearest of their former idols, Mademoiselle Gaussin. The appearance of Mademoiselle Raucourt, then at the height of her beauty, had temporarily obliged Mademoiselle Sainval to move to the theatre of Lyons; but it was not long before she was readmitted to the Théâtre Française, and until 1791 she there played tragedy and even comedy, for she created the part of the countess in *Figaro's Marriage,* and that part, on the testimony of Beaumarchais himself, did great honor to her talent. It is her name which is mixed up with the history of Lérins.

After the company of the Comédie Française had been broken up, Mademoiselle Sainval belonged for some time to the troupe of the Théâtre Montansier; then, one day, she retired to Provence, to this Isle of Saint Honorat, which her father had bought in 1791, and which was then called the Isle Marat. She lived in the fortress formerly occupied by the monks. She left her retreat only to make a trip to Russia, in 1822. Fifteen years later, she reappeared in Paris to take the part of Iphigenia in Tauris, in a performance for her own benefit: she was then sixty-five years old. She returned to Provence, but this time made the home of her old age at Draguignan, where she

died in 1836(?). During these later years of her life, she desired that her past should be forgotten, for she passed under the name of Madame de Saint Eyreix.

The actress thus lived a score of years in the solitude of Saint Honorat. It has been alleged sometimes that the traces of paintings which were still apparent not long ago on the walls of certain rooms were the remnants of a decoration thought out by Mademoiselle Sainval to brighten the aspect of this gloomy dungeon. It has even been said that Fragonard was the author of these paintings, that he had spent some time at Grasse at the period of the Revolution, that he was certainly the friend of the actress, etc. . . . But we have made the acquaintance of the monks before the Revolution, and we know, besides, what the majority of the monasteries had become at that period. At the abbey of Lérins, as in the other abbeys of France, there were apartments which were very worldly in taste, and which were not unworthy of sheltering a theatrical queen.

Nevertheless it still appears strange that, at the age of forty years, a *comedienne* should have chosen as a retreat this desert isle and as a home this mediaeval fortress. Romanticism, which was commencing to claim its devotees,

might inspire such a caprice; but we must remember that this caprice lasted twenty years! Then her contemporaries paint Mademoiselle Sainval as an artist who was free from all romanticism, without emphasis, discreetly sensible, with noble and measured motions, no Corinne. So why did she come here and why did she remain here so long?

As romantic histories have today so much attractiveness for investigators, how is it that no one has attempted to penetrate the secret of Mademoiselle Sainval, and to give a little life to the cloisters of Lérins, by calling back to them the unexpected image of a beautiful princess of tragedy?

July 30, 1909.

CHAPTER IX

FRÉJUS

THE right of way of the railroad from Toulon to Nice skirts the houses of Fréjus; the highway passes through the town and forms its main street. Express trains ramble by and automobiles scorch through. The travelers looking out of the windows of their railway carriage or limousine scarcely glance at the Roman ruins which lift their heads above the hamlet. And yet Fréjus is worthy of more attention than this. It is a frontier town, the last of veritable Provence. Beyond it, stretches a singular country, a prey to cosmopolitan hordes, where the towns, even the ancient ones, have lost all their character and originality. The little city of Fréjus has preserved its customs and its appearance.

The severity of the climate has, it is said, protected it from the invasion of "winter tourists." A fortunate mistral has preserved it from this plague, to the great despair of the people of Fréjus, who are friends of progress.

They do not fail to protest that there was never air more salubrious than that of their fatherland, and they give as a proof of this that Pliny the Younger sent his freedman, the comedian Zozimus, to *Forum Julii* to be cured of a malady of the chest. The epigraphists, it is true, have deciphered a Greco-Latin inscription, discovered at Fréjus on the tomb of a child of seven years, who had died "under a climacteric influence"; but other decipherers of inscriptions have remarked that by this "climacteric influence" we must understand that of the seventh year, which the ancients held to be pernicious. Happily these archaeological arguments have convinced no one. There still are at Fréjus neither battles of flowers, nor roulette wheels, nor dying palm trees.

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Of all the Roman towns whose fragments strew the soil of the south of France, there are few whose ruins are as speaking as those of Fréjus. Here the grand edifices have almost disappeared; nothing remains of the decoration and the sculptures which clothed the monuments; not an arch of triumph, not even a

temple column; nothing but naked architecture, the stones of which, admirable stones, the color of gold and of verdigris, are sufficient to mark out upon the spot the whole plan of a maritime city. Here are the ramparts, the gates, the theatre, the arenas; here is the citadel which protected the harbor, and, in the midst of the alluvial soil which has replaced the ancient lagoon, here is the harbor itself outlined in the midst of cultivated fields by the ruins of its wharves.

All is Roman—the light, the outlooks and the countryside. The aqueduct which carried to Fréjus the waters of the Siagne stretches the interrupted chain of its mutilated arches through the fields and the orchards. Like the *agrum romanum,* the great plain of the delta of the Argens stretches down to the sparkling sea. Toward the north, the Virgilian valley of the Reyran spreads its meadows, cut by hedges of reeds, in the midst of which appear here and there the three cypresses of a peasant's home, *inter viburna cupressi.* In the distance, woods of stone-pines arise on the summits of the hills, and their majestic umbrellas frame views of distant mountains whose peaks are outlined against the sky, as harmoniously arranged as those of the Apennines.

The barbarians devastated the Roman city. Within the space enclosed by its walls, henceforth too vast, the little episcopal city of the Middle Ages grew up. Of this there remains a fragment of wall, the house of the bishop, and the cathedral, a strange and sombre cathedral, half buried beneath the soil. With the bishop's house it formed a veritable fortress, flanked by towers and intended to repulse assaults by the Saracens, who once already had taken and annihilated Fréjus.

How many beauties there are in a church of France! This little cathedral of Fréjus is not a famous monument, and yet how many treasures are accumulated here! Folding doors of wood, carved by the cabinet makers of Provence in the time of the Renaissance, close the principal portal of the church. The dome of the old baptistry rests upon eight granite columns with Corinthian capitals, remnants of some Roman edifice. The paneling and stalls of the choir present a simple and delicate decoration of Gothic style. The sarcophagi of two fourteenth-century bishops rest in one of the lateral apses. At the entrance of the choir there is placed a delightful painting divided into several units where, among the images of male and female saints, we perceive Sainte

Martha trampling the Tarasque under her feet. This is perhaps the work of one of those Siennese artists who traveled to Avignon to decorate the palace of the Popes, unless some one should one day discover that it is necessary to attribute this painting, like so many others, to some French painter; but then, it would be necessary to recognize that this painter saw, admired, and did not forget the masterpieces of the school of Sienna.

Under a canopy ornamented in Renaissance style are placed the kneeling statues of two bishops of the seventeenth century—Barthélemy and Pierre de Gamelin, uncle and nephew. The first had received his investiture from the worthy Crillon, to whom Henri IV had summarily given the bishopric of Fréjus "in order that he might profit from it by transferring it to whatever man of the church and wealth he might discover"; he was nevertheless a good and charitable bishop. The second was celebrated in the history of his diocese because of his terrible quarrels with his canons, whom he had dared to forbid "to wear long hair and turned-up moustaches, not to speak of roses and shoe-ribbons, to play any prohibited game, to frequent houses and free-living companies of evil repute, or to walk within or before the

churches without necessity, lest they turn their backs to the Holy Sacrament.'' And these two Gamelins, represented as praying in the shadow of their old cathedral, have the appearance of very honest prelates. The worthy Crillon did not make an unfortunate choice.

The marvel, unfortunately invisible, of this cathedral is its delightful marble cloister. Its arches and pillars are complete, but buried in modern masonry whence one see here and there the capital or the entasis of a little column peering out. Fine paintings, which ornamented the ceilings of the galleries, are half effaced: it would not be possible to restore them; but nothing would be more easy—and it is said they are thinking of it—than to demolish the masonry in which the masterpiece is imprisoned, and then one of the most delicate and rarest cloisters of France will appear, for it is formed of a double gallery.

Around the cathedral rises a little town which recalls all the little towns of Provence in the arrangement of its streets and the variety of its houses. Some mansions built in the eighteenth century by wealthy burgesses bear the stamp of that style and imagination which rendered so charming at that period the architecture of Aix or of Avignon: the Hotel Sieyès with its heavy

caryatides; the Bareste house, with its elegant door with the broken pediments; the "House of the Four Seasons," where each window is ornamented with a charming mask. . . . To the grace of the façades add, in the deep silence of the half-dead town, the charm of memories and the rumor of great names: Fleury, who administered the diocese of Fréjus before becoming the tutor of Louis XV and governing France; Sieyès, who was born in the house with the caryatides; Pius VII, who, twice, between Savona and Fontainebleau, was the guest of the smart "House of the Four Seasons"; Napoleon, who disembarked upon the strand of the Argens, on his return from Egypt, and embarked there for the island of Elba.

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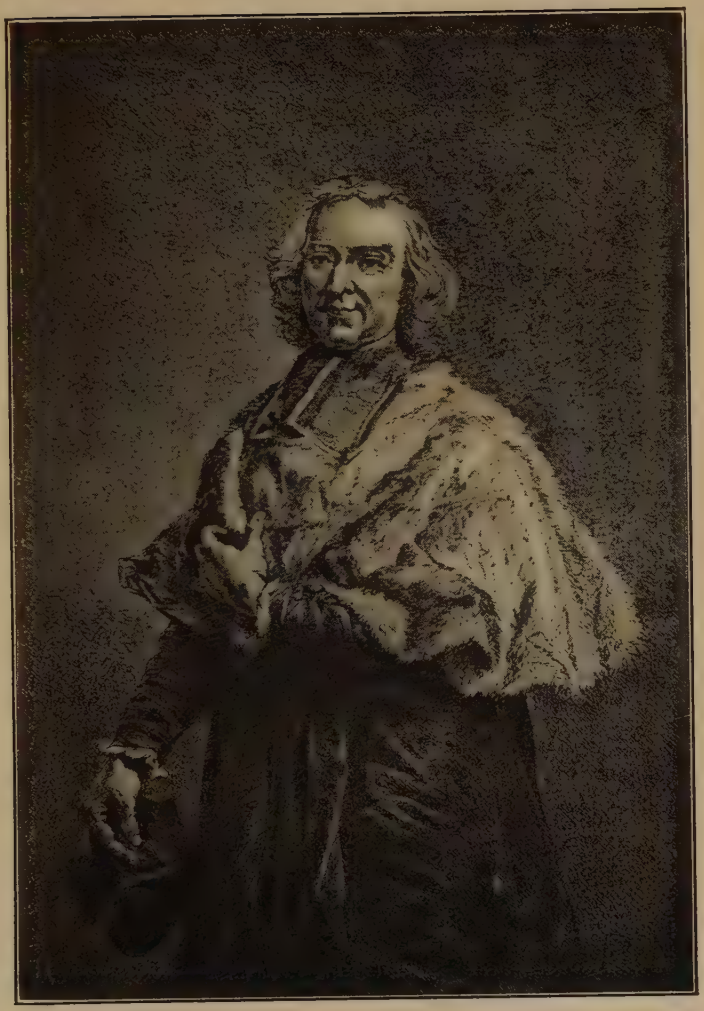
There was formerly a charming fountain on the place before the cathedral. A woman, standing, her head enveloped with long veils (for which reason she was called "The Vestal"), held in her right hand a vase whence flowed a jet of water. This vase had manifestly been added to the original statue, but it did not set badly upon it, and this monument was a marvelous decoration for the



CARDINAL FLEURY.

pretty square of Fréjus. Now the people of Fréjus, having decided that it would be well to enlarge their square, demolished their fountain and decided that the statue should depart to the museum. They installed this museum in the chapel of the old bishopric.

This so-called Vestal formerly adorned the mausoleum of Valbelle in the church of the Chartreuse de Montrieux. I have related the singular fate of the different sculptures which formed a part of this monument. This one represented Sainte Monica.

It is very unfortunate that it was taken from the place which it occupied. Fountains are the grace and joy of the cities of Provence. Doubtless, Vestal or Sainte Monica, this figure of a draped woman had been made to weep over an ostentatious tomb. But, during the more than a century that she stood there, directing the mouth of her urn over the little stone basin, she had become in a certain sense a naturalized citizen of Fréjus. What cruelty to send her to the museum, she who charmed the passersby with her touching countenance and her harmonious gesture!

March 26, 1910.

CHAPTER X

GRASSE—NOTES UPON FRAGONARD

IT is a unique spectacle which we discern from the Corso of Grasse on a fine day, when we behold spread before us the great depression of the plain of Mouans, dotted with dark clumps of olive trees—the two chains of hills which imprison it, whose wooded slopes descend to the edge of the sea in a series of slow and admirably spaced undulations; and, at the limit of vision, a bit of the Mediterranean shining and flashing like a fragment of a broken mirror. This is the most magnificent smile in all the land of Provence. Soon, on the other bank of the Var, everything changes its aspect. The landscape suddenly becomes harsh, naked, brutal. The county of Nice bristles with steep, graceless, theatrical mountains. A steep slope cut by narrow valleys bastions the coast of the Riviera. Here nature remains more true, more touching, more human; its lines preserve softness, restraint, elegance.

Resting on the flank of its little mountain,

SAINT RAPHAEL.

clothed with copses of pines, olives, and orange trees, Grasse, silent and perfumed, Grasse, without roulette wheels or tramways, seems a charming paradox in this country sacked by hordes of croupiers. Here we enjoy the peace of an honest sub-prefecture, and here we do not breathe the odor of the gambling-houses with which the whole littoral is poisoned. The brick chimneys of its perfume factories, scattered over the slope of the hill, somewhat mar the beauty of the landscape and the purity of the sky,—less hideous, however, than the metal domes and the glass towers of all the beflagged "palaces" which crowd one another from Saint Raphael to Mentone.

And how charming it is, in its almost Tuscan grace, the old town piled at the foot of its old tower! What an amusing labyrinth is formed by its vaults, arcades, stairways, terraces, all that tangle of alleys climbing, turning and twisting in the fashion of Provence, up to little areas planted with elms and sycamores! Precious remnants, here and there, tell the history of the town, bear witness to its wealth and the taste of its sons. Here is the shabby but very noble façade of an old mansion, the rude and heavy mass of the cathedral before which is a platform designed by Vauban, the graceful

Gothic architecture of the Church of the Oratory; here, especially, are the beautiful paintings with which generous citizens of Grasse adorned the chapel of their hospital (three Rubens brought from Rome, where they adorned the church of Santa Croce di Gerusalemma) and the choir of their cathedral (*The Assumption* by Subleyras, *The Washing of the Feet* by Fragonard, *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* by Sébastien Bourdon, etc. . .). Finally, in the pleasure of the vistas which open here and there upon the plain and the sea, we recognize that innate sense of beauty which forms the glory of old Provence.

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Below the Corso of Grasse, in the first turn of the road which descends in curves toward the bottom of the valley, an iron gate shuts off the shady courtyard of an old home. At the back, under a stone arch, we perceive a fountain and the shrubbery of a garden. It was in this house that Fragonard, during the first days of the Revolution, received the hospitality of his cousin Maubert, to whom he sold various "works of painting" for 3,500 livres. Among these works were the four celebrated panels

which he had formerly executed for Madame Du Barry, and which the favorite had not accepted. These ravishing compositions later decorated the walls of the salon of Monsieur Maubert. His successor, Monsieur Malvillan, left them in the same place. It is well known how, a few years ago, they disappeared from Grasse. They are today in England and tomorrow they will be in America (Note 19). Other works of Fragonard, which were the property of the same Monsieur Malvillan, also took the road of exile.

Formerly all travelers who passed through Grasse rang at this gate and begged the favor of admiring the Fragonards. But orders were strict and the visitors were usually sent away without any politeness. I remember that I had that cruel experience on four occasions. One day, however, whether I had used more eloquence in making my request, or the absence of the proprietor had emboldened his servant, I was able to obtain access to the house and look upon the masterpieces.

Now the masterpieces have departed. Copies have replaced them. The only things of Fragonard which remain in this house, I am assured, are two or three sketches and the Revolutionary attributes with which the painter adorned the

staircase of his host. What use would it be to incommode the proprietor who has succeeded the pitiless Monsieur Malvillan, to see these fragments once more?

Facing this house, on the other side of the road, is a little public garden which the people of Grasse conceived the idea of dedicating to the memory of Fragonard. The bust of the artist stands upon the shaft of a column. Mossy stones in the midst of a little basin, a few pines, and a beautiful cedar compose a setting which is truly in the style of Fragonard; it lacks only a mutilated antique or the ruins of a sarcophagus.

Seated upon a bench, I was amusing myself by collecting from my memory my souvenirs of a few red-chalk sketches in which Fragonard celebrated the glory and the charm of the gardens of Rome, when a citizen of Grasse came to sit beside me. He was a fat little old man with black eyes and quick notions. I imagined that he resembled Fragonard, and that made me tolerant of the desire which he immediately manifested to enter into conversation.

"This garden," he said, "is very pleasing. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, Monsieur, I am greatly pleased with

PUBLIC GARDEN, GRASSE.

the thought which has led your citizens to render this discreet homage to the memory of Fragonard, close to the house where he lived and where he had himself placed the most important of his works."

My companion did not conceal his pleasure at the eulogy which I made of the good taste of his fellow citizens, and he continued:

"We are going to do better still. This bust is not anywhere near sufficient to honor an artist such as Fragonard. We are going to build him a monument, a real monument, a monument which will be four meters high. . . ."

I had seen just a few moments before the sketch of the "real monument": a Fragonard in the art of painting, seated upon a rock, and behind him, in the attitude of running, a young girl whose figure and action seemed to be borrowed from the celebrated compositions of the *Progrés de l'Amour*. At the thought that they could place this uneasy and misshapen sculpture in the lovable and quiet garden, I could not refrain from saying:

"Not here! At least, not here!"

The man of Grasse appeared only slightly astonished:

"Many persons think as you do that the monument should not be placed in this square.

Besides, what will we do with the bust that is here? We must find some place for it."

"Perhaps it would have been more logical to find it before ordering the monument."

The man of Grasse replied by an evasive gesture which meant—perhaps you are right, but we have the monument on our hands, and we have got to place it somewhere. So he went on:

"Some have talked of placing the monument of Fragonard on the Clavecin. [This Clavecin is a little open space whose shape is indicated by its name (clavecin=harpischord), and in which, in front of a few trees, are a music stand and a monument of the Provençal poet Bellaud de La Bellaudière.]

"But what will you do with Bellaud de La Bellaudière and the music stand?"

"They will put those on the Corso: you have seen the great works which they are carrying on up there. . . . [With a gesture he indicated to me the magnificent terraces by means of which the Corso of Grasse is to be enlarged and beautified.] But there is still another plan and that is the best one: they will put in a row in the Corso, Fragonard, Bellaud de La Bellaudière and the music stand. . . ."

"If it was necessary to enlarge the Corso,

it was doubtless because it was too small. Admit that it is a singular idea to immediately encumber it with a music stand and two monuments. . . ."

"To make room for them, it will only be necessary to take the fountain from the Corso and carry that elsewhere, to the Clavecin, or even to the Jeu de Ballon! What the dickens! You can take a fountain to pieces just like a wardrobe. And Grasse can very well make some sacrifices for the glory of its children! As a matter of fact, we only have the embarrassment of a choice. . . ."

And, for five minutes, he laid out for me all the puss-in-the-corner of statues, fountains and music stands which is suggested to a man of Grasse by the desire of honoring Fragonard. This man juggled the monuments of his city like balls. I ended, however, by interrupting:

"Tell me why Grasse desires so strongly to put up a monument to Fragonard when this bust and this pretty garden are sufficient to recall to us the name of the artist."

"Sir, I can't tell you; but there will be festivities and it is even said that a minister will come. Such things are not refused."

Having no answer to this, I said nothing.

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Fragonard was born at Grasse April 5, 1732. I seek for the house of his birth. His biographers affirm that it is in the Rue de la Font Neuve. This street is not twenty yards long. But there are two houses on the right and two houses on the left. In which of these four houses did Fragonard first see the light of day? The men of Grasse would do well to find out and indicate it to visitors by an inscription. This would be a method of witnessing their devotion to the memory of Fragonard which would be more useful and assuredly less expensive than the erection of a monument.

We know almost nothing of the childhood of Fragonard, which was passed at Grasse. His father was a glove-maker, it is said—the baptismal certificate of his son describes him as a "merchant"; he must have experienced a reverse of fortune. At what age, under what circumstances, was the child sent to Paris? We do not know. How does it happen that no one at Grasse has searched the municipal archives and the notarial records in order to substitute some precise information for the doubtful anecdotes handed down by the biographers?

A single fact seems almost certain, that the

little Provençal remained in his native town until he was fourteen.

Consequently it has been asked in regard to Fragonard, as it is customary to do for all artists and all writers, what influence the first spectacles offered to his childish eyes may have had upon his genius? This is an amusing diversion which should not be taken too seriously; for it is sometimes deceiving. It is necessary to avow that his birth in Provence does not explain everything in regard to Fragonard.

Doubtless, more than one trait of character in the lovable and light-hearted Frago betrays his southern origin: his enthusiasm mingled with skill, his malice mixed with candor, and that unbridled taste for pleasure from which he was only half restrained by the need of earning his living and protecting his renown. It is not only in the man that we can discover the marks of his heredity. The artist received from his race the fire of his genius, those "happy endowments," that "facility with the brush" which Monsieur de Marigny feared would be lost in the academic atmosphere of the School of Fine Arts. He owed to it, especially, that natural elegance which always kept him from falling into commonness or filth, for

a flame of passion purified his libertinage and an accent of sincere tenderness kept his sentimentality from turning into silliness. We must credit these charming but accessory qualities to his Provençal good taste. The glory of Fragonard is neither his facility, nor his fertility, nor even the grace of his imagination; it is his method of painting. Now, no other painter of Provence has been conversant with this manner, either before or after him. We must seek his masters elsewhere, and we will find his successors elsewhere.

In regard to the "red-chalk sketches" which Fragonard brought back from his stay in Rome, one of his latest biographers, Monsieur Camille Mauclair, asserts that the artist has rendered the magnificence of the gardens and the fields of Italy "with the instinct of a Provençal born in natural surroundings which were almost the same." This is very easily written. Localities in Provence present a certain analogy to those of Tuscany, I admit; but neither at Grasse nor in its surroundings do I perceive anything which recalls to me the Roman Campagna and the Sabine Hills. Then, even in his Italian sketches, Fragonard already adds to the classic landscape something which the Italians themselves—even Panini—had not suspected,

and the value of which may be appreciated if we compare upon the walls of the Louvre, where they are hung side by side, a charming red-chalk of Hubert Robert with an admirable red-chalk of Fragonard. This something is the vibration of light around objects, the play of tones in the shadows, the haze of the distance. All this, doubtless, was not a great novelty in the middle of the eighteenth century, but, until then, northern artists, alone or almost alone, had thus seen and translated nature.

Let us admit, however, that this test may not be completely decisive as far as the sketches of Fragonard are concerned. But his painting! What a singular paradox that any one should desire to show here any trace of a southern origin! From the day of his arrival in Italy, when he was twenty-five years old, he began to copy conscientiously the works of Barocchio, of Pietro da Cortona, of Solimena, of Tiepolo. Now which of these men, except Tiepolo, has left a trace on Fragonard? The Venetians were the only painters in Italy whose lessons were rendered intelligible to him through a kind of natural affinity, and the Goncourts are right in demonstrating in his sketches "the dull reds, the powerful browns of Bassano." But how little the Venetian sky, light, and sea

resemble the sky, light, and sea of Provence!

The true masters of Fragonard were, according to the period of his life and according to the caprices of his fancy, Rubens or Jordaens, Terborch or Cuyp, always Flemings or Hollanders. These are the men from whom he has inherited, these are the ones to whom the closest and most intimate relationship attaches him, for he in his turn became intoxicated with the same visions which had intoxicated them. It is of them that we think before *Les baigneuses* or *La bacchante endormie,* before *Le contrat* or *Les vaches au gué,* when we wish to add to the pleasure of admiration the lesser satisfaction of criticism.

There is doubtless an ingenious way of explaining everything and of demonstrating that Fragonard is never more Provençal than at the moment when he makes us think of the art and nature of the north. This is the bias which Monsieur Camille Mauclair has displayed: "I have," he says, "passed several seasons in Holland, I have passed some in Grasse where I am writing this book in the midst of the country where Fragonard was born. There is nothing more like a sunset upon the Meuse or the Amstel, or the milky mornings of the Zuyder Zee, than mornings upon the Estérel and the

"L'AMOUR FOU," BY FRAGONARD.
From the House of M. Maubert.

great flights of clouds over the plain between Cannes and Grasse; and the green and silvery greyness of the olives, unfurling themselves like an intumescent and foamy sea, recalls inevitably the coloration of the *polders*. . . . There is even a great psychological resemblance between an inhabitant of Grasse and one of Delft or Haarlem. Fragonard obeyed a mysterious affinity in seeking to penetrate the manner of these masters of landscape. . . . Fundamentally, the landscape of Grasse is almost that of Fiesole with the clearness of its details, and with the diffused light of the mouths of the Meuse, the Rhine and the Waal. Fragonard is the living proof of these identities."

Fiesole? The remark is just. But the mouths of the Meuse or the Waal? . . . After many sojourns in Provence, after many trips to Holland, I remain more strongly impressed by the differences than by the resemblances between the two lands, the two skies, the two peoples. There are sometimes hazy mornings on the Estérel; there are sometimes bright ones on the Zuyder Zee; but these rare and fleeting hours do not count when one wishes to define the aspect of a country. And, besides the image of his birthplace, which will be carried away by

a child who is removed elsewhere, there will be, so to speak, a synthesis of the familiar and repeated visions which day by day were offered to his eyes.

Once more I have returned to behold the marvelous spectacle which is spread before the eyes of the people of Grasse, those hills whose lines appear so sharp and so precise, under a limpid light which shows forth all things with equal clearness. And, once again, I have not been able to discover any affinity, no matter how subtle, between this spot, so firmly drawn that nothing remains secret or unfinished, and *"le heurté, le roulé, le fouetté, le tartouillis du divin Fragonard."*

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Fragonard does not seem to have returned to Grasse until on the threshold of old age, and then he remained there only a year. It would be possible that he passed through it in 1756, when he went to the School of Fine Arts at Rome, or even when, five years later, he returned to Paris; but there is no proof of this.

His fellow citizens did not forget him, for, in 1751, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacra-

ment in Grasse purchased of him to ornament its chapel a great religious painting for which 7,000 livres were paid. This is the *Lavement des pieds* which may be seen today in the choir of the cathedral. This youthful canvas already reveals some of the qualities of Fragonard. It was seriously damaged in 1795 in the fire which devastated the cathedral, which had been transformed into a hay-barn. It was restored, but very unskilfully. It is today in a lamentable condition.

When Fragonard went again to Italy in 1773 to act as companion to the banker Bergeret de Grandcour, he passed very near Grasse, but did not reach his native town. The banker, with his carriages, his wagons, and his painter, embarked at the port of Antibes. Returning, the caravan reached France by the way of Vienna, Dresden, and Strasbourg.

In spite of this long absence, Fragonard does not seem to have broken all his bonds with those of his relatives who remained at Grasse. In 1790, frightened by the first riots of the Revolution, he thought of asking shelter of one of his cousins, Monsieur Maubert, and left for Provence. He brought in his luggage the decorations which he had executed for the pavilion of the "collations of the king" in the Château

de Louveciennes, and which Madame Du Barry left on his hands.

The trip of Fragonard to Grasse, at the time of the Revolution, has been surrounded with all sorts of legends which are now disproved by the researches of Monsieur Pierre de Nolhac.

At what date did the painter come to ask hospitality from his cousin Maubert? Certain historians have said 1794. But as documents have been discovered which prove that Fragonard was in Paris in 1794 and 1795, his sojourn in Provence was set forward to 1796.

A receipt, preserved in the very house where Fragonard lived, leaves no doubt as to the exact date in which he was in Grasse. Here it is:

"I have received from my dear cousin Maubert, for works of painting, the sum of 3,600 livres, in full satisfaction of all demands up to this date.

"Grasse, March 10, 1791.

"FRAGONARD, painter to the king."

Monsieur de Nolhac, aided by other documents, concludes that Fragonard passed the winter of 1790-1791 at the home of his cousin.

These "works of painting" were the five canvases, *L'Escalade, La Poursuite, Les Confidences, Le Couronnement* and *L'Abandon,* which were, when this was written, the property of J. Pierpont Morgan and had been taken to

England; the doorheads and an over-mantel panel representing flights of cupids, which were painted on the wall and which have disappeared; a few sketches; and, finally, a mural decoration painted on the staircase, showing Revolutionary attributes, fasces and Phrygian caps.

We do not know why Fragonard made this trip. Why did the painter start on his travels in the last months of 1790, although he had never shown any desire to revisit his birthplace? When this trip was ascribed to 1794 or even to 1796, we could imagine old Fragonard driven from Paris by the Terror and poverty, going to seek in a distant retreat tranquillity and forgetfulness of the tragic scene of which he had been a spectator. But it is necessary to discover another explanation for 1790. The spectacle of the first troubles, the thought of an uncertain future, reduction of income, change of manners and fashions, any of these doubtless might have driven into exile another than the light-hearted and careless Frago; but he, on the testimony of his contemporaries, was not the man either to foresee or to fear future evils. Besides—as Monsieur de Nolhac has shown with many proofs in support (Note 20)—he was always an irre-

proachable "patriot"; his family was allied to that of Maximin Isnard, who was President of the Convention; he was himself the friend of David, who, during the whole Revolution, did not cease to show the most lively interest in him. Finally, if fear drove him from Paris in 1790, why would he have returned in 1791, when the situation was worse and when events surpassed in horror anything that the most pessimistic might have surmised a few months sooner. In short, we know neither the reason for his departure, nor that for his return.

It has often been related that Fragonard painted Revolutionary emblems on the staircase of the house of Maubert to quiet the denunciations of the Jacobin Club of Grasse. Monsieur de Nolhac declares that these are pure inventions. "The motifs of a rather simple symbolism, which his skill with the brush multiplied without effort, correspond with the ideas which were current in Fragonard's family and which he himself shared. . . ." I nevertheless wished to see if there were not some foundation for this legend, in spite of this. I went to the mayor's office at Grasse, which is installed in the old episcopal palace; I consulted the old municipal ar-

chives of the Revolutionary period; I went through the reports of the police, the patriotic denunciations, the reports of the domiciliary visits; in none of them did I find either the name of Fragonard or that of Maubert.

Decidedly Grasse can tell us nothing about the work or the life of Fragonard. . . . But there will soon open at Nice an exhibition where we will see some of his paintings and some of his sketches; and we will be consoled for our useless labors.

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On entering, let us stop before the photographic reproductions of the canvases which decorated the house of Maubert. Without these prints, we would have no record of the paintings of Grasse. Doubtless they give us only a very feeble idea of the beauty of the originals. They render as too dark and too solid the clumps of trees and the flowering shrubs which form the setting for the gallant scenes; but at least they preserve for us something of the intimate charm of Fragonard's imaginations. This charm has completely disappeared in the celebrated dry-points of the etcher Marcellin Desboutin, which may be seen at the same

exposition. These are only accentless translations which do not allow us to suspect anything of the transparency of the colors, or of the fantastic grace of the landscapes. . . .

How does it happen that these paintings, executed at the order of Madame Du Barry to decorate Louveciennes, remained in the hands of the artist, who brought them to his cousin? It has been supposed that Louis XV, who was growing old, had found these compositions with their tender, almost melancholy, gallantry too insipid, and that he had preferred to see the allegories of Vien, less restrained and less discreet. Monsieur de Nolhac has offered another version. According to him, the favorite, with her mania for criticizing everything and directing everything, required incessant retouching. The artist rebelled; the fifth canvas, *L'Abandon,* was not executed in oil and remained simply washed in sepia (it is still in this state); Madame Du Barry satisfied Fragonard with a fee of 18,000 livres, and allowed him to retain his paintings.

He kept them in his studio until 1790. Perhaps he did not wish to part with works into which he knew he had put his most perfect art and his most delicate perceptions; perhaps under the reign of Louis XVI he did not find

MADAME DU BARRY.

any art-lovers very desirous of displaying in their homes canvases executed for the mistress of Louis XV. However this may be, he carried them to Grasse. It has been imagined that doubtless he did not care to leave in his quarters in the Louvre this somewhat compromising testimony—even for an excellent patriot—of the complaisance with which he had labored to embellish Louveciennes. So it was that the paintings destined to enliven and illustrate royal loves ended by ornamenting the salon of a modest burgher of Provence.

If they had only remained there! They were so well suited to the carvings of the old home! Aided by the photographs which we have before our eyes, we again see those precious masterpieces which offered the most adorable mixture of art, caprice, and passion, and in which were mingled all the grace, all the elegance, all the prestige of the French eighteenth century. It is a great grief to think that they could have been taken from their home, that is from us, without protest.

How many disasters like this will be necessary to show those who are charged with the duty of making laws that we need a law which would prevent the exportation of our works

of art, and would protect the patrimony of France? Such laws exist in Italy, Greece, and even in Turkey. When the law regarding the separation of Church and State was passed, it was agreed to insert in it—with severe penalties—a clause forbidding the sale of the treasures of the churches for exportation. Why not render general this measure of safety? We are accountable to our successors for the treasures and the glory which the past has bequeathed to us. Then we owe it to the artists, the creators of these treasures and this glory, to watch over their works, to prevent them from perishing or diminishing in beauty. Who will assert that the Fragonards will retain all their charm under the English sky or in an American palace? It is said that such a law would be useless against the tricks of the dealers. Doubtless, the example of Italy shows us, no matter how close the meshes of the net may be, we will not retain in France all that belongs to France; but we can in this way prevent the clandestine robbery of the most celebrated and the most precious works.

Let us return to the Fragonards of the Exhibition at Nice. These are still in France. For how long?

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Of the hundred works of the exposition, there are many—I will not say how many—which we would see America purchase without regret: but she will leave these to us. But it is necessary to be indulgent toward amateurs who try to authenticate mediocre counterfeits by placing them among works which are worthy of admiration. It is also necessary not to be hard on the organizers of expositions, who cannot without danger set themselves up as experts.

A series of old engravings recalls, by their extraordinary diversity, the most charming or the best known works of Fragonard: *Le Contrat, La mère de famille, Le sacrifice de la rose, Le verron, La gimblette, Les hasards heureux de l'escarpolette,* etc., etc. And the seventy-five compositions engraved by Martial for the "Fables" of La Fontaine show us Fragonard as an illustrator.

There is perhaps no painter whose particular genius is so badly expressed by engraving, precisely because no one was more of a painter than Fragonard. Even though sweetened and softened by time, these engravings, no matter how perfect they may be, and there are exquisite ones among them, translate only the grace

of the attitudes, the liveliness of the gestures, the piquancy of the story; they cannot reproduce the most precious quality of the works by which they are inspired, the magnificence of the coloring and the magic of the diffused light; they are like the piano score of a symphony whose principal beauty lies in the richness of the orchestration, in the number and brilliancy of its sonorities. They tell the story, they emphasize its scabrous or sentimental intent, they show the brilliancy and not the genius of the artist, so they remained popular at a period when the paintings themselves were scorned by everybody. It is a good thing, however, to collect here some of these engravings, because they are delicate and pleasing, and also because they reveal how varied was the inspiration of Fragonard, with what ease it passed from salaciousness to tenderness, depending on his age and possibly on the taste of his customers. Fundamentally, little importance can be attached to the object caressed by the light, if the light is caressing.

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Here are some pretty sketches, especially three charming drawings, from the Rodrigues

collection: an *Étude de chats,* an *École de peinture,* and a delightful bistre wash-drawing where a few spots are all that is necessary to create a marine view.

Two very beautiful sepias: one a landscape with factories, *La pêche aux écrevisses,* which belongs to Baron Roger Portalis, author of a very remarkable work upon Fragonard; the other, *La leçon de musique.*

A single red-chalk, which appeared very uncharacteristic to me, recalled the Fragonard of the Italian villas. One would have loved to see again some of these adorable designs, especially here where we may still see gardens almost like those which he loved and drew. If originals were lacking, why not have shown some of the engravings of the Abbé de Saint Non?

Among the paintings, there is one which attracts the attention of everybody, *Le Pacha.* We remember that we have already seen it in several exhibitions. But we rejoice to find it again here. It is one of the works in which the genius of Fragonard expresses itself in the most brilliant fashion; it is perhaps the most surprising and the most enchanting of "those vague and magical diffusions of light" of which the Goncourts wrote. One must have

eyes untuned to delight to behold without a shudder of pleasure that clear light, at once abrupt and soft, which falls upon the white vestments of the pacha and the yellow cushions upon which he is stretched, and envelops the little girl who kneels and seems, with arms crossed on her breast, to offer to her master her blonde hair and rosy cheeks; which leaves in the shade the red coat of the old man with outstretched hands who presents the two newcomers, then trembles, becomes degraded, dies out, just as the silhouette of the other young girl who, more timid, awaits standing the moment when she must prostrate herself. . . . And the faces of the furies who leer in the background. Beside this magnificent painting, there has been placed a fine and spiritual variation in sepia.

A young woman with skirts tucked up lies upon a blue sofa, "waiting for the bath," in the words of the catalogue. This grand picture, at the same time that it shows the miraculous skill of the painter in rendering the fine solidity of youthful flesh tones, is not without power to make us believe that the charming Frago was more sure in his drawing and more certain in his shadings when he did not increase the size of his canvas too much.

This miraculous skill appears again, but with more charm, in a gracious painting, *Au Sérail;* but this irresistibly makes us think of *Les Baigneuses* in the Louvre, and such a memory puts this in the shade!

I will also mention, among the precious works which are here exhibited, a pretty replica in the shape of a medallion of the *Chiffre de l'Amour; l'Heureux ménage;* an extraordinary sketch of the *Sacrifice de la Rose;* two delicate pastels in faded tones; three little sketches, *Le Suppléant, Les Parques,* and a copy of Solimena; lastly a decorated panel sent by the museum of Marseilles, *La ville de Marseille protégée par Mercure.* What grace and seductiveness this last painting has! How artfully the general color, ardent at the two extremities of the picture, weakens toward the central group, which is a harmony of infinitely pale pinks, blues and greens! When we study the play of the light and the choice of tones, we immediately think of Tiepolo. His influence is manifest. Let us, however, not weigh down Fragonard under too harsh comparisons, and let us admit that his somewhat heavy and overpainted composition is still far behind the supple elegance and the free movements of the Venetian.

Let us not forget two charming little dancers in pannier gowns. Are they by Fragonard? It is possible. They are exquisite, that is certain.

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One of the curiosities of the exposition is a little portrait of Lamartine at the age of fourteen, which belongs to Madame de Contes de Bucamps.

The youth is leaning against a rock; the ripples of a brook or a lake die at his feet. He is dressed in the fashion of 1804, in wide trousers and a black tight-waisted coat, opened at the bosom to disclose the folds of an enormous jabot. With his right hand he holds upon his breast a wide-brimmed tall hat. His left hand, ungloved, rests upon the rock. The features of his countenance are so pure and so delicate that he seems like a young girl dressed as a boy.

A strong gale drives the clouds through the heavens and plays through the blonde and curly hair of the little Lamartine (Note 21).

This portrait in its delightful preromanticism makes us think of the phrase of Chateaubriand, saluting in Victor Hugo the child of the miracle. Look at this tender and proud

youth—everything in him breathes genius. You might say that he already feels "his heart bounding in his breast." His destiny is written. He hears lyres; he perceives tombs; his loves will be brief and melancholy. Have you ever imagined Lamartine at fourteen? You could not have produced another image of him. . . .

It is so resembling, so good a likeness that we are a little inclined to doubt the date of the painting, and ask if this picture was not composed later, much later, from a miniature of Lamartine as a child.

I do not know what critical basis there is for attributing this picture to Fragonard. If there is any real reason, it would be necessary to conclude that the painter had created a new manner only two years before his death. . . . It is so much Lamartine! but it is so little Fragonard!

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They have stuck away in a corner of the exhibition a pretty engraving, *L'élève intéressante,* from a picture by Marguerite Gérard, "pupil of Monsieur Fragonard." A young girl seated is looking at a print of the *Fontaine d'amour.* She has taken off her large hat with

long plumes, which she has put on the heads of two marble cupids.

Study the profile of this young girl—you will find it in more than one composition of Fragonard. For it is Marguerite Gérard herself who is portrayed in the features of the interesting pupil and, in fact, she very much interested her master, Jean Honoré Fragonard.

The biographers of the painters are not in agreement as to the matter of this "interest." The puzzle is not solved.

Fragonard was thirty-seven when he married Marie Anne Gérard, whose family dwelt in Grasse. He had made her acquaintance at the house of the perfumer Isnard from Grasse, who had settled at Paris. She was then seventeen. When one has the black eyes and the vivacity of a girl of Provence, one is not ugly at seventeen. But Fragonard painted the portrait of Madame Fragonard several times and it is she, I am quite sure, who is represented in a singular painting exhibited at Nice, done in the Flemish manner. Her precocious beauty had quickly passed; there remained only a fat woman, vulgar enough, and with thickened features. But Marie Anne had brought into the house of her husband her younger sister Marguerite, who was eight years old when they were

married. She grew up in the family. She was ugly enough, it was said, in her childhood; but she became very beautiful at twenty. Fragonard was then approaching fifty!

The letters of the pupil to her friend have been often quoted. But they are—the early ones at least—so original and so charming in expression, that I wish at least to reproduce a few lines from them: "My good friend wishes to know if I take pleasure in saying agreeable things to him. Well! I admit it, it is my only enjoyment. My grateful heart is responsive, it occupies itself with my good friend and tells him all that he inspires which is pleasant. But when the manner of expressing it has been able to please my friend, I am all the more happy; I believe that I love him more, thinking that I please him more. . . ." And this charming portrait of the good friend: "You want me to speak to you of your defects and you make this request of your friend. You know that friendship, elder sister of love, is short-sighted; it is a family trait. So it is not to me that you should address yourself, for I see nothing except your amiable mind, only a child whom nothing grieves, whom nothing appeases; a true nurseling of caprice. Caprice produces coquetry; coquetry seduces, when

it is led by wit. In you, they are always together. . . ."

Fragonard taught painting to Marguerite Gérard, who exhibited for the first time in 1790. But this amiable and brilliant woman took great care not to imitate the old master from whom fashion had turned away, and she practised successfully the cold, elegant and dry painting demanded by the taste of her contemporaries. The Revolution passed. Fragonard, forgotten and disdained, was almost reduced to poverty. He turned toward the pupil who owed him everything from the day when she entered, with her sister, the little house at Vaugirard, the home of the painter, then rich and glorious. The gentle little minx would not lend, replied by a refusal, and, when the poor old Frago was astonished, she added: "My good friend knows that it is necessary to be reasonable. He also knows that in pampering his whims, I would increase them without making him happier. I well know that this reasoning may be called foolishness; but each must reason as his situation requires. . . . We must praise economy; that takes the place of fortune when one is wise."

The "interesting pupil" was not less interested.

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In the midst of the salon where the Fragonards are hung is placed a little model of the monument intended to ornament one of the squares of Grasse. Reduced to these dimensions, it is a pleasing piece of bric-à-bric, but when one imagines this unbalanced group, whose lines twist and turn, erected on a public square in the shape of a monument four meters high, we pity the poor people of Grasse. We find that it is painful to be obliged to pay a contribution toward the "uglification" of a ravishing town, for the profits of the exhibition are intended to cover the expenses of the monument.

February 15-22, 1907.

CHAPTER XI

VENCE

IT is Mardi Gras. Sensible people must flee from mirthful Nice, Nice, where all afternoon the people, dressed in linen and masked with wire netting—like bags surmounted by muzzles—are going to throw plaster in each others' faces. We must escape from the dust and noise of the carnival. So we have crossed the city before the traditional cannon shot gives the signal for the festivity. Already enormous trucks are rolling through the streets, loaded with bags of confetti; already, at the edge of the sidewalks, in the doorways of houses, hucksters are placing the stands from which they will sell the frightful projectiles and invite wayfarers to provide themselves with "boms-boms." We already see "pleasure-seeking bands" occupied in choosing their dominoes and trying on their masks: they are hideous. And we have reached the station of the Southern Railway to go to Vence.

THE APPROACH TO VENCE.

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An hour and a quarter of travel in a tiny train which goes through the valley of the Var, then with prudent slowness climbs the slopes and crosses the deep ravines—we are at Vence.

The old town—like all the villages of this region—sits astride a rocky promontory and is confined between two ravines. It still has a proud aspect, with its shattered walls, its crumbling terraces, its tottering towers, its cool little squares, its great sycamores and its fountains. The streets are narrow and silent. Their twists defy the wind and the sun. Through a half-open door we perceive the thick balustrades of an old stone staircase. Beyond, at the end of narrow vaulted corridors, appear, framed in black and sordid masonry, valleys full of light and hillsides clothed with olives.

The only important building in Vence is the cathedral; for there was formerly a diocese of Vence. It is not monumental. Its architecture is heavy and the paintings which adorn its altars are poor enough. Its only treasures are a few fragments of Roman sculpture, for it had been built upon the site and with the materials of a temple. It is even said that, in the seven-

teenth century, they closed up a niche which existed in a very ancient wall; it was the hole through which the pagan divinity rendered its oracles. The inhabitants of Vence would be angry with me—justly—if I did not praise the stalls of their chapter. They are a little deteriorated. But some of the carvings which ornament them and which are the work of a sculptor born in Grasse in the fifteenth century have a charming popular accent.

These are all the curiosities of Vence. Add to them the spectacle of a mountain site which is truly admirable; add to them especially the charm of the beautiful orchards which cling to the stony hillsides. Possibly all this would not hold you very long, for neither beautiful situations nor pretty orchards are rare in this country. But, in a chamber of the hospital of Vence, they showed me the singular portrait of an old bishop. Mediocre painting, but extraordinary features: a badly shaped head; a saffron complexion; eyes full of goodness, and a little timid; an immense and deformed forehead; a flat and twisted nose and, under a scrap of white moustache, fine but cruel lips; almost a monster, but a handsome monster. Now, this portrait is that of Godeau, the first academician of the French Academy, Godeau, who was

among the most famous of the brilliant minds of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

Then curiosity awakes. The imagination is amused by the contrast between the setting of this village of Provence, lost in the mountains, imprisoned within dark walls, and the features of this parlor priest, a brilliant versifier, one of the poets of the *Guirlande de Julie.*

Vence? An agreeable refuge for one who wishes to avoid for a day the tumult of the carnival of Nice. Godeau? A good subject for a literary dissertation. But never in this life would I have dreamed of reading Godeau, if I had not been, in passing, interested in the poor little cathedral of the brilliant bishop.

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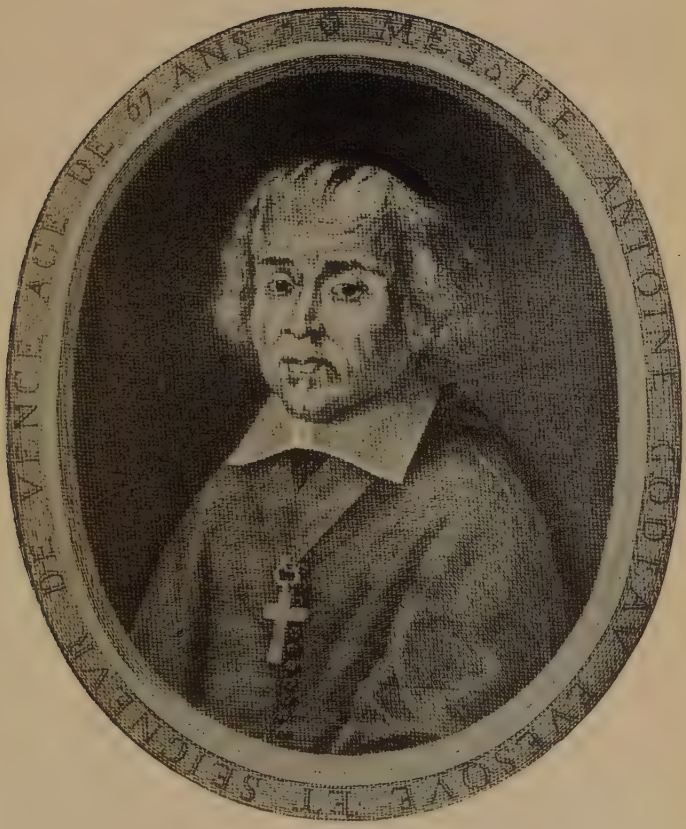
We must remember what kind of a youth Godeau passed, and how this lovable priest, before collaborating on the map of Le Tendre, had explored the whole country on its account.

We commence with a sufficiently melancholy romance.

At Dreux, where he was born in 1605, he conceived an affection for the sister of the poet Rotrou. He wrote her letters, he wrote her verses, but under a fictitious name. He was

only seventeen, he was timid, he did not dare to declare himself. The object of this discreet passion married; the youth was in despair. But, three years later, she became a widow and the passion flamed up again. New letters, new verses. Finally, one day, the young widow, perhaps conquered by this persevering love, declared that she wished to know her unknown adorer, and that an interview would be agreeable. The man who presented himself was a little cripple, ugly and black. The remembrance of so many gallant letters and so many fiery verses could not efface the disheartening impression caused by the sad visage of the poor devil. Godeau was turned out of the house. He was ill from it for a long time and, to crown his humiliation, unscrupulous friends published his letters and the story of his misadventure.

He went to Paris, and, immediately, the charm of his speech, the wealth of his poetic vein, the sparkling grace of his intercourse, caused him to be sought after by the most sought-for belles. His cousin Conrart introduced him to the Hôtel de Rambouillet. He worked on the map of Le Tendre. He was an habitué of the "blue chamber of Arténice." Ballads were made about his virtuous passion



ANTOINE GODEAU, BISHOP OF VENCE.

for Angélique Paulet, "the beautiful lioness." No one ridiculed his tiny stature. They called him "the jewel of the Graces," the "dwarf of the princess Julia." His reputation as a wit was so well established that his name was the first upon the first list of the academicians of the French Academy.

However, he experienced religion. He took holy orders at thirty. At thirty-one he was priest, and, in the same year, was consecrated bishop of the united dioceses of Grasse and Vence. Richelieu, to whom he had addressed a paraphrase of the *Benedicite*, then made the following pun: "Monsieur l'abbé, vous me donnez *Benedicite*; je vous donne Grasse."

The joining of the two dioceses caused great difficulties at both Vence and Grasse, to such an extent even that the king and the Holy See had to give way, and, after a few years, Godeau had to surrender Grasse, choosing Vence.

Godeau made a fine sonnet when he said farewell to Paris:

Je te quitte pourtant, agréable séjour,
Pour le séjour sauvage où mon devoir m'appelle;
Paris a mon estime et Grasse a mon amour.

I leave you, however, agreeable resting place,
For the wild home whither my duty calls me;
Paris has my esteem and Grasse has my love.

This was no vain speech of the poet. Grasse and Vence were sincerely loved by the gallant abbé of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. The "jewel of the Graces" became an excellent bishop, greatly concerned to follow in his conduct and in the government of his flock the example of his two preferred models—St. Charles Borromes and St. Francis de Sales. He followed the first in active charity, and the second in tender devotion.

He does not conceal that exile at first appeared somewhat grievous to him:

Il est vrai qu'Artenice et Julie ont des charmes,
Je ne les puis quitter sans répandre de larmes,
Mais si leurs doux appas me pressent de les voir,
Leur vertu me convie à faire mon devoir.

It is true that Artenice and Julie have charms,
I cannot quit them without shedding tears,
But if their soft allurements entice me to see them,
Their virtue requires me to do my duty.

And he accomplished this duty with untiring zeal.

"I feel," he writes, "that I have taken a wife in espousing my diocese. My wife is poor, hard as rocks, rough and melancholy. But I must love her, since I have taken her, and even believe that the husband has many more ill qualities than the wife."

Very poor, very rough and very melancholy was the diocese of Vence (Note 22). The cathedral was in a pitiful state. The organ was ruined. The music consisted of a chapel master, a boy choir, a player of the cornet à bouquin and a player of the serpent. The clock was out of order. The belfry threatened to fall. The people of the town made short cuts through the church as they would have gone through a street. The cemetery was a public place where everybody dried his linen and pastured his cattle. The chapter was not rich; for this is the list of the assistance which they gave to converts: in 1654, they gave fifteen sous "to a poor man who had become a Catholic," twelve to two Jews "converted to the faith," twelve to a Dutch gentleman; in 1657, fifteen sous to "a converted English gentleman," and eight "to two poor renegades" who had embraced Catholicism.

Godeau—we possess the record of his pastoral charges and ordinances—gave himself to his little diocese with all his heart. He visited the parishes assiduously, even those which were buried deep in the mountains. Neither snow, nor floods, nor surly greetings from the mountaineers deterred him. He took heed of the misery of the churches, penetrated by wind and

rain. He desired that the baptismal fonts should be repaired and that the holy waters should be put out of reach of the ants; he founded brotherhoods, distributed alms, and opened a hospital. When the caterpillars invaded the orchards of a parish, he went to exorcise them. He wrote beautiful pastoral letters in which he informed his diocesans of the great affairs of Christendom. He was not hard on the Protestants. He tried to deliver popular sermons in the Provençal tongue; for, he said, if God allowed him the choice between the gift of miracles and the Provençal tongue, "he would rather choose to speak this language well than to resuscitate three dead men every day." He desired that the morals of his priests should be pure and threatened with excommunication the ecclesiastics who took tobacco "either in powder in church, in the choir, in the confessional, above all during the celebration of the mass, or in smoke, in their houses, unless they are alone and in need of it on account of their health (of which they shall bring us the certificate of a physician in good form), or in the houses of the worldly." He excommunicated surgeons or barbers who shaved at the hour of mass. The same penalty against men and women who "assemble in the church

when marriages are celebrated, to utter dishonest cries and hoots, as well as married people who kiss each other in the holy places." He forbade the giving to infants who are baptized of ridiculous names, "such as Fouquet, Esprit, Maneau," and particularly the giving to girls of diminutives of saint's names, "like Berthoumaisette, Claudette, Alayette, Andrinette, Ninon, Madon, etc. . . ." Finally, one of the longest and most difficult affairs of his episcopate was that of the "rigaudon." He condemned this dance, because of its "abominable postures against Christian modesty and civil honesty, which we know to be the cause of several pollutions of youth." The Parliament of Aix at first assented to the severity of the bishop by enjoining players of the drum and the fife "to no longer play the said dance under penalty of three hundred livres fine," then later in a new decree it showed itself more indulgent. Godeau had to appeal from it to the privy council of the king, which definitely condemned the "rigaudon." . . .

Through all these old documents, we see at once the paternal figure of the good and vigilant bishop and all the life of a Provençal hamlet in the seventeenth century.

In the midst of the care which his flock gave

him and the worry caused by the administration of his poor little diocese, Godeau sometimes regretted his friends of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

Mon heur serait parfait, si quelque moindre espace
Séparait Rambouillet des collines de Grasse.

My happiness would be perfect, if somewhat less space Separated Rambouillet from the hills of Grasse.

To keep himself in contact with "Rambouillet," he carried on an incessant correspondence, in prose and verse, with Conrart, Voiture, Chapelain, and all the guests of "the Hôtel." He even sometimes went to Paris; but his stops there were not long. He was "in residence" most of the time.

In his hours of discouragement, he took refuge in the study of the classics. "I do not find," he writes to Balzac, "anybody who understands me and who knows either our friends of the past, or our friends of the present. Cicero and Virgil are well-known here by name; but all familiarity with them ends at the end of school. As for our muses, they have not yet passed the Durance. In the hours which I have free, I have my illustrious dead who console me for the loss of time which I have experienced with the living."

Godeau enjoyed—as a poet and a half-frozen

one—the sky of Provence. His old-fashioned verses really have much charm, if we read them in the very place where they were written:

Tandis que, dans le Nord, l'Aquilon se démène,
Glaçant les champs que baigne ou la Marne ou la Seine,
Nous sommes réchauffés par les tièdes soupirs
Que puisent de leur seins les amoureux zéphirs. . . .

While in the North, the north wind roars,
Freezing the fields bathed by the Marne and the Seine,
Here we are warmed by the gentle breezes
Which amorous zephyrs emit from their bosoms.

Decidedly the men of the seventeenth century were not insensible to the delicate enjoyments given to the eyes and the mind by the changes of the heavens and the caprices of light. (You may recall in La Fontaine's *Psyche* the amazement of Racine before a sunset, in the park of Versailles.) Godeau knew how to enjoy the spectacles of nature. In the delightful portrait which Mademoiselle de Scudéry drew of the "Wise Man of Sidon" (as she had nicknamed the bishop of Vence), she says of him: "The rising and the setting of the sun give him a pleasure of which not everybody is capable. A tranquil night, sown with brilliant stars, gives agreeable occupation for his glances. The sound of a fountain sweetly charms his ears and the vast extent of the sea fills his soul

with I know not what pleasure, which causes him to be more respectful to the *gods* who are its masters." Neglect this mythological plural —is there not here, before nature, that sort of religious sensuality which the Romanticists believed that they were the first to experience?

Godeau composed at Grasse and at Vence Christian eclogues in which he expressed as well as he could the charm which he experienced in living under a southern sky:

O champs, ô champs de Grasse, ô fertiles collines,
O rochers cultivés, ô sources argentines,
O myrrhes, ô jasmins, ô forêts d'orangers!

O fields, O fields of Grasse, O fertile hills,
O cultivated rocks, O silvery springs,
O myrrhs, O jasmines, O groves of orange trees!

And here are verses less vague than this series of interjections:

Que j'aime à voir le ciel qui luit d'un feu si pur,
Qui sans tache et sans ride étale son azur,
Et qu'avecque plaisir je ferme la paupière
Pour n'en pouvoir souffrir la trop vive lumière!

How I love to behold the heaven which shines with a light so pure,
Which cloudless and spotless spreads before us its perfect blue,
And with what pleasure I close my eyelids
In order not to suffer from the too vivid light!

This expression is possibly a little awkward; and yet how well these verses render the impression of burning pleasure given to the eye of the Northerner by the dazzlement of this great light!

Vous, qui malgré l'hiver êtes parés encor
Des feuilles d'émeraude, entre deux pommes d'or,
Arbres au tronc de bronze, honneur de ces bocages,
Superbes orangers, j'admire vos ombrages. . . .

You, who in spite of winter are still adorned
With emerald leaves, between two fruits of gold,
Trees with your trunks of bronze, the honor of these woodlands,
Superb orange trees, I admire your shade. . . .

Rhyming, writing, working, rekindling the fire of his old age in the sunlight at Vence, Godeau died in his diocese. Boileau informs us that he had been an "estimable" poet, and his pastoral letters prove to us that he was a good bishop.

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Having thus evoked the ungraceful and charming phantom of the "dwarf of the princess Julie" among the lemon trees and the fig trees at Vence, we reach the little town of Cagnes.

What an admirable highway descends slowly

toward the coast between olive groves! How well we perceive from here in all its beauty the Mediterranean landscape! Beyond the hills, in a depression of the valley, a brilliant triangle of azure is suddenly outlined. And however blasé we may be toward this eternal spectacle, always the same on all the shores of the Mediterranean, we cannot restrain a cry of wonder, when, suddenly, between the silver branches of the two olive trees, a bit of motionless sea appears.

At one of the turns of the road, separated from us by a deep ravine, rises the little town of Saint Paul, enclosed in its old walls, which are almost intact. It is the classic eagle's nest. Saint Paul was the seat of the lord of the manor, when Vence was the seat of the bishop.

Then, through a long wooded gorge, the gorge of La Buffle, we come out at the foot of Cagnes which still possesses the crenelated tower of its old château on an isolated hill with steep slopes clothed with aloes. Here and there, upon the terraces, among the orange trees, is a tall palm: this is Africa. Elsewhere a little chapel with arches, before which stands a great cypress: this is Tuscany.

Vence, Saint Paul, and Cagnes were the three most important towns governed by Godeau;

SAINT PAUL.

and we have in one day traversed half the diocese.

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At twilight, we return to Nice. The cannon's roar has ordained that the multitude shall cease throwing plaster in each others' faces, and they have stopped. We walk through a thick dust of confetti. A white mist envelops the whole city. The procession has broken up. The floats are departing. The "pleasure seeking crowds" scatter, with their masks in their hands, then slump down on the seats of the cafés. But the prodigious kermess continues. Bands of music march through the streets followed by bands of maskers who scream and dance with unwearying frenzy, and always dance the "rigaudon," indifferent—it is evident—to the decrees of the Parliament and to the curses of the "Wise Man of Sidon."

March 8, 1901.

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Ten years ago, Vence, seated astride of its rocks, in the midst of orchards and fields of violets, had kept the charm and the color of a true little city of Provence. Not far from the abominable caravanseries of Nice and of

Cannes, it was a joy to discover this hamlet, with crumbling walls, with ruinous terraces, and to wander in its cool and winding streets, made gay by the murmur of charming fountains. In the last ten years, Vence has greatly changed. All around the old episcopal town, "villas" have been built, and the diocese which Godeau, the "dwarf of Julie," made famous, now presents the appearance of the most vulgar and the most offensive Parisian suburb. It is a sort of Raincy or Bois Colombes. Then, Vence has ambitions, great ambitions; it aspires to become a "winter resort," that is to say a cross between a gambling hell and a sanatorium for the use of Berliners. The "Côte d'Azur" is now no more than a Brandenburg colony. While waiting for the little horses and the roulette wheels, it offers to "winter tourists" "battles of flowers." The croupiers are not far behind.

If only these people of Vence had the common sense to spare the delightful decoration of their city! But they are not content with destroying the olives in the surroundings of Vence. Now they are wild with the desire to possess an entirely new town hall, and, for the construction of the monument, they have chosen a little square before their humble cathedral.

They have therefore demolished the old house of the bishop, and have replaced it by a building, and such a building! Doubtless, the constructions which they demolished had neither style nor character, but they harmonized with the church, and they framed the most lovable, the most irregular and the most moving of the little squares of Vence. It was a precious picture which they have just destroyed, the wretches!

And this is not all. A boulevard, edged with sycamores, followed the line of the ancient walls, on one side of the town. They have just cut down these sycamores—there were seventeen beautiful ones—to make room for a tramway. I do not need to tell you that they only needed to turn the rails a little bit aside to spare these trees. But the people of Vence believe that posts and wires will increase the importance of their town. Perhaps in the dog days, on their naked and dusty boulevard, they will regret the shadow of their sycamores. But, as good citizens, thoughtful for the future of their city, they will console themselves by the thought that strangers who go through Vence will say: this is a *well-managed* town, rich in *means of communication!*

April 15, 1910.

CHAPTER XII

THE VALLEY OF THE DURANCE

I

The Temple of Le Vernègues

ONE day Peiresc made a small drawing of the Temple of Le Vernègues (*Templum Alburniense*) and this sketch remained unknown among his manuscripts.

The antiquaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who studied and figured the Roman monuments of Gaul, do not seem to have paid any attention to this. Millin does not even mention it in his *Voyage dans le midi de la France.* It was first described by an architect named Pinchaud in 1817, and, a few years later, the Comte de Villeneuve wrote in his *Statistique des Bouches-du-Rhône:* "Who would believe that it would still be possible to discover a Roman monument in France in the nineteenth century? When we say that the ruins of a temple, remarkable because of their beauty, important by their very size, have been

NICOLAS DE PEIRESC.

forgotten to this day, it might be thought that they were buried under the firs of the Vosges, in the valleys of the Cévennes, among the inaccessible rocks of the Alps or the Pyrenees. No, these ruins exist in the center of the most populous part of Provence, six hours from Aix, two hundred yards from the highway to Paris; they adjoin a château often inhabited by its owners and doubtless visited by every person of consideration in the country. And yet no one has spoken of them, no traveler has described them, no artist has drawn them; it is a virgin subject which we present to our readers and especially to those who are strangers to the department. If the beautiful columns of the temple of Le Vernègues which still stand [in reality there is only a single column; it is admirable, but unique] had been placed upon the rocky hills of Greece or in the deserts of Asia Minor, these ruins would probably be well-known in Europe; so there are chances in the reputation of monuments. . . . *Habent sua fata.*"

The Comte de Villeneuve told the truth. But the ruins of Le Vernègues nevertheless remained unknown to travelers and even to archaeologists. When Mérimée inspected the historic monuments of Provence in 1835, he

did not honor this antique temple with a visit. It is only in our time that Monsieur Formigé has attempted to rediscover its original plan. Finally, three years ago, Monsieur Clerc, the learned curator of the Borély museum, wrote an excellent article on this subject, a model of taste and of archaeological prudence. But not even these labors have awakened the curiosity of amateurs and tourists. Many dwellers in Aix are still ignorant of Le Vernègues. Perhaps I would never have known of it, if, one day, loitering in the Carpentras museum, I had not seen a painting by Jules Laurens representing a marvelous antique column standing in the midst of a forest lighted by a mysterious moonlight, and if I had not read below this strange landscape: *Temple du Vernègues* (*Bouches-du-Rhône*).

Since then, I have seen and reseen Le Vernègues, and I do not smile at the enthusiasm of the Comte de Villeneuve.

The highway from Avignon to Aix, after crossing the Durance by the bridge of Mallemort, passes through a region of low shrub-covered mountains. This is Greek Provence after the Tuscan Provence of the Comtat. Here and there, between two stony hillsides, a tiny meadow and a few sycamores betray a spring.

A couple of leagues from Mallemort, at the base of the hill which supports the château and the crumbling ramparts of Le Vernègues, in one of these verdant valleys, there stands a charming country-house which is called Maison-Basse. A few steps from it, in the edge of a little wood, stand the ruins of a temple.

It was a small structure; its dimensions were less than those of the Maison-Carrée. Time has half destroyed it. Though the foundations are almost intact, only one of the four walls of the *cella* has remained standing, with the pilaster at one corner; and of the colonnade of the peristyle there remains but a single column, which is so beautiful that it is sufficient to evoke all the prodigy of Greek art in this corner of Provence.

This column, admirable in its entasis, furrowed with twenty grooves, bears a Corinthian capital whose almost rigid leaves scarcely pass the edge of the corbel. It shows so much strength and slender grace, its capital is sculptured with so much taste and precision that, at the first glance, we refuse to class this work, which is so delicate, with the other productions of Gallo-Roman art.

Does this impression, which I am not the first to feel before the column of Le Vernègues,

agree with archaeological theories? I do not know. Here, as elsewhere, we must admit that an impenetrable obscurity envelops the origin of the antique monuments of the south of France. At Le Vernègues, the remnants of sculpture and the fragments of inscriptions which have been discovered about the temple cannot illuminate the mystery. They do not even tell us surely the designation of the edifice. It is supposed that there was a Roman villa on the spot where the Château of Maison-Basse now stands, and that the temple was its domestic chapel, probably consecrated to the protecting divinities of the neighboring spring. This is a probable hypothesis. It is only a hypothesis.

There is no doubt that this pagan sanctuary was turned into a Christian church at a very remote period. A little Romanesque chapel, dedicated to Saint Cézaire, is attached to the wall of the *cella*. But we can see a still more ancient trace of the metamorphosis of the temple in a fine column which frames a window pierced in the ancient wall. This has recently been freed from the ivy which enveloped it, and it is perfectly apparent that it is a reduction of the large column of the peristyle, a clumsy reduction which betrays the inexperience of the

workman. Monsieur Clerc believes that this work may date from the Carlovingian, or possibly the Merovingian period, that is, from the time when Christian sculpture blindly copied antique models in place of being freely inspired by them, as was to be the case a few centuries later.

The very uncertainty of the conjectures of the archaeologists adds the attraction of mystery to the beauty of the objects; but it is the witchcraft of light and setting which gives this ruin its incomparable seductiveness.

The masonry of the foundation is half concealed by briers and shrubs. Ivy climbs the wall and hangs over into the *cella.* The shadows of the great trees in the neighborhood dance over the old stones. A lawn of green grass spreads before the crumbling sanctuary. From it radiate the long avenues of an almost wild park, decorated by the eternal foliage of pines, box, laurels and evergreen oaks; here reigns the silence of the sacred wood. Beyond the forest is a meadow of flowers at the end of which a brook flows, and we almost hope to see the shepherds of Theocritus pass through this valley.

Then, if we climb the little hill, dry, rough, and perfumed, which rises behind the temple,

we see anew the column, the divine column, which gloriously lifts its acanthus leaves above the tops of the trees, against the open sky and a boundless horizon. What a view! The mountain of Le Vernègues crowned with ruins, and, in the distance, the chain of Le Luberon, all bathed in azure, an enchanting picture which, by the brilliance of its light and the harmony of its lines, once again recalls the vision of Greece from the background of our memories.

Nowhere in the south of France have I felt antiquity so near and so living. There is no doubt that, upon our soil, there is no monument as pure in style, as delicate in its elegance, as this simple Corinthian column. Also, at Le Vernègues, the light, the solitude, the situation, all conspire to render the ruin more magnificent and more moving. The delightful Maison-Carrée, situated in the midst of a modern city, is no more than a valuable monument. Criminal restorations have deprived the theaters of Orange and Arles of all their prestige. The Triumphal Arch of Orange no longer represents anything triumphal in that dusty square where it is now lost. The last time that I visited the antique remains of Saint Rémy, I saw them with horror outlined

ARCH AND MONUMENT, ST. REMY.

against a background of sheds. The four columns of Riez, standing in the midst of a meadow, retain a melancholy grandeur which strikes the imagination, but suggests neither enthusiasm nor reverie. Here, on the contrary, the *genius loci* is always present, hidden in the shrubs which have invaded the *cella* of the temple. A complaisant magician, he only asks to be allowed to produce for us the miracle of the revival of antiquity. The murmur of the brook, the humming of the bees, the perfumes of the hillsides are a sufficient incantation.

II

Silvacanne

On the left bank of the Durance, half a league from the bridge of Cadenet, there rises an old Romanesque church with a decapitated tower, against which stand some farm buildings. These are the remnants of the Cistercian abbey of Silvacanne.

Different etymologies of this strange name have been proposed. Choose that which shall please you. Is it *Sylva canens,* the white forest, or perhaps the singing forest? Is it *Sylva cannarum,* the forest of reeds? The latter seems to me the most probable. For such must have been the appearance of the landscape when, in the eleventh century, a few hermits came to take refuge in this solitude. Then the bed of the marshy Durance must have extended to the rocky hillside, covered with forest and shrubbery.

It is now one of the most beautiful spots in Provence. The fragments of the monastery,

standing at the base of the rough hillside, overlook a happy valley, delicately cultivated like a great garden, where meadows, vegetable beds and orchards intermingle their insolent riches. The wild Durance, almost pacified, flows without haste through flats of gravel. Canals which convey the rapid and cool waters of the Alps spread wealth and joy everywhere. The rampart of Le Luberon defends the laughing country from the mistral, and, over there, on the opposite bank, hamlets lift their towers and steeples at the foot of the steep bluff. Lauris looks at us across the arcades of its superb terraces. Cadenet spreads its red roofs over the lowest slope of the mountain which seems to open behind it, as if to allow us to guess the magnificences of the great circus of Lourmarin.

An abundant spring gushes forth near the old monastery. It formerly traversed the cloister and fertilized the surroundings. It now flows forth through the mouth of a pretty fountain, formed by remnants of a Gothic console carved with oak leaves; it passes through an enclosure of fruit trees whose spring flowers contrast with a background of cypresses; it hastens to lose itself in the meadows, and its sound is the whole life, the

whole gaiety of the silent ruins, clothed in blazing light.

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The abbey is now a farm. The court of the cloisters serves as the farmyard. The beautiful galleries, half Romanesque and half Gothic, are filled with carts. The columns have disappeared. The trilobed mullions have been broken. Remnants of sculpture still decorate a few pillars. The chapter hall, whose elegant vault rests upon two columns, one smooth and the other fluted, has been turned into a stable; its floor has been filled in to the level of the stone benches on which the monks sat. In a marvelous Gothic refectory, which has become a haymow, the consoles which support the vaults still show some ornaments of incomparable beauty. And that is all which remains of the conventual buildings.

The church, less maltreated than the other structures, offers the perfect type of a Cistercian church.

There is nothing which tends more strongly to make us recognize the greatness of the work of Citeaux than to meet, in every part of France, the same edifice, built on the same plan, and expressing the same ideal in its structure

THE CLOISTER OF SILVACANNE.

and its lines. Silvacanne not only reproduces the aspect and the design of its two Cistercian sisters of Provence: Sénanques and Le Thoronet. We find once more in this spot the faithful image of the great abbeys of Burgundy, such as Pontigny, Fontenay, and many others still, dispersed not only through the provinces of France, but through all Christendom of the twelfth century. Here is the plan in the shape of a Latin cross, here are the two lateral naves with the semi-cradle vaults, buttressing the principal nave, here are the four rectangular chapels of the transept. In conformity with the vow of Saint Bernard and the constitution of the Order, there is no carving; the capitals are decorated with leaves in extremely low relief or with very simple curves.

Men and centuries, devastating this church, have despoiled it of the ornaments given to it by the less austere piety of the monks of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; they have almost restored it to that state of simplicity which its founder had desired. It was heard, that vow of Saint Bernard, who was indignant because the church covered its walls with gold, while it left naked its children, the poor. These stones preach in their own manner penitence and humility. Nothing remains but a charming

Gothic ciborium carved in one of the walls of the choir. All the rest has perished. No stained glass; no paintings; the tombs have been destroyed. If this admirable monument moves us, it is solely by the pure beauty of its architecture, the powerful harmony of its proportions, its air of eternal solidity. Seven centuries have passed, but not a stone of the great structure has started.

However, these vandals have been far too Cistercian: a pitiful spectacle is offered by this church, deserted, desecrated, whose very pavement has been torn out, and which no longer retains a trace of its history.

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It was not the Revolution which annihilated Silvacanne, for this did no more than finish the work of destruction commenced more than three centuries earlier. The abbey endured scarcely three hundred years.

Its origins are like those of all the great monasteries.

A hermit comes in the eleventh century to settle upon the marshy banks of the Durance. A few companions soon join him and lead the same life of labor and penitence. The little

colony builds a chapel, establishes a ferry across the river, and opens a hospice for travelers. It opens up the forest of reeds, drains and purifies the surroundings. The princes of Les Baux take it under their protection.

Saint Bernard arrives in Provence and there founds the first Cistercian monasteries, Le Thoronet, Aiguebelle, Sénanques. He is asked by the protectors of Silvacanne to establish in this place a house under his rule. He responds to their pleadings, which must have been pressing, for the situation of the new monastery does not correspond at all to the customs of Citeaux. The constitution of the order desired that the monks should choose by preference a deep and narrow valley, in order to limit their outlook to the domain of the convent. Silvacanne stands in a wide valley, and, on three sides, no mountain closes the view to assure the solitude of the monks. Doubtless, the promises of the princes of Les Baux decided Saint Bernard to depart from the rule. In fact, they kept their promises, for it was because of them that Silvacanne soon attained to extraordinary prosperity. In the second half of the twelfth century, enriched and defended by Bertrand Des Baux, the monks built

the monastery and the church whose remains are before our eyes.

This prosperity did not last long. About the end of the thirteenth century, the morals of the abbey relaxed and its downfall commenced. During the following century, a sequence of misfortunes ruined the community. The plague decimated the monks; the inundations of the Durance destroyed the fields; bandits sacked the monastery. About 1440, the "venerable chapter" of Saint Sauveur at Aix, which coveted the revenues of the abbey, believed that the time had come to lay its hands on Silvacanne and plunder the last monks. This affair, whose story may be read in the history of Silvacanne by the Vicomte d'Estienne de Saint Jean, presents a curious picture of ecclesiastical manners in the fifteenth century. The chapter found a complaisant abbot who, in consideration of a suitable commission, transferred the abbey to it. The inventory which was then drawn up furnished indubitable proof of the poverty of the convent; but the lands were valuable and the vassals taxable. Citeaux naturally protested, and the litigation was carried to Rome. It is not to be doubted that the "venerable chapter," to justify its conduct, made use of trickery and lies. Never-

theless it succeeded in obtaining bulls which confirmed its possession, and henceforth bore the title of Abbot of Silvacanne.

The monastery was dead. The abbey was no more than a country house for the canons of Aix. When an epidemic raged in the town, they came here for refuge or they sent their choir boys here. During the religious wars, the church buildings of the convent were captured and sacked by the Huguenots. Worship was re-established in the church in 1607; but the chapter had no interest in the monastery, save in its revenues, and, in the eighteenth century, a hermit settled in the abbey to protect its buildings, already half ruined.

The Revolution banished the hermit and sold Silvacanne at auction as a national property. Since then almost nothing has been done to save this beautiful monument of Cistercian architecture. There was once a proposition to utilize it as an establishment of public utility; but no results came from this plan. Its proprietors offered it to a contractor who planned to utilize its materials to build the bridge of Cadenet; the deal was fortunately broken off at the last moment. Under Louis Philippe, the government bought the church and listed it as

a historic monument. It was even at one time intended to rededicate it; the population of the neighboring commune, La Roque d'Antheron, having been preserved from the cholera in 1835, made a vow to repair Silvacanne and re-establish divine service there; but it did not hasten to fulfill the vow, and one day, its curate persuaded it that it could set its consciences at rest by repairing the parish church. In addition, Silvacanne had become the prey of frenzied treasure seekers who tore up the pavements of the naves and destroyed the tombs. Finally, under Napoleon III, the State decided to undertake some repairs; they were disastrous; the church was roofed with great stone plates, which were removed and replaced by an abominable tile roof.

Twenty years ago, some Benedictines came to weep and pray at Silvacanne. The successor of Dom Gueranger, Dom Couturier, abbot of Solesmes, started negotiations with the proprietors to purchase the monastery. He gave up this plan. Since then events have justified his apprehensions. We will see no more monks in the ancient house of Saint Bernard.

Meanwhile the cloister, the refectory, the chapter hall, all that now remains of the buildings of the convent, hasten to ruin.

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Whenever chance brings us in contact with a masterpiece outraged by the wickedness of men, we cannot refrain from a spasm of anger. But it seems as if the anger dies down more quickly here, vanquished by the witchcraft of the light. A ruin under our northern sky is always something lamentable and tragic; one might say that it cries for vengeance. The heaven of Provence advises us to be more indulgent. We are indignant against those who profaned the old cloister and degraded the charming refectory of the monks; we curse the architect who covered the twelfth-century church with tiles; but the grace of the flowery oasis which surrounds the monastery, the coolness of the rushing waters, the splendor of the great valley all bathed with azure, soon make us lose the memory of these ugly things.

And it is possibly for this reason that in no other country do men treat the monuments of the past with such cruelty. They divine that nature will efface the horror of their misdeeds.

III

The Château de La Tour d'Aigues

After we have climbed the steep streets of the hamlet of La Tour d'Aigues and reached the top of the hill, we suddenly come out on a vast esplanade which overlooks the valley of the Lèze, and find ourselves before the ruins of a strange and enormous edifice.

A moat surrounds the regular quadrilateral which is formed by symmetrical buildings. The gateway resembles an arch of triumph. Two square pavilions, of which only the walls are standing, form two of the corners of the château, and two round towers the opposite corners. The structures which joined the pavilions and the towers are mostly demolished. In the midst of the enceinte stands a formidable donjon which is split open through its whole height and which shows its devastated interior through this open wound. This mediaeval tower is covered with a sheathing on which, in the seventeenth century, were placed frames of garlands surrounding initials. Otherwise all

CHATEAU DE LA TOUR D'AIGUES.

these buildings carry the mark of the Renaissance. The friezes and the window frames are delicately carved.

The most original and the best-preserved part of this enormous château is the monument which gives entrance to the court of honor. This strikes us at the first glance, and is the glory of La Tour d'Aigues. Four detached columns adorn its façade; they frame the gateway and support a frieze decorated with admirable trophies. On the tympans are carved victories armed with labarums. The same motive is repeated above, but on a smaller scale. The entablature rests upon two superb composite pilasters. A triangular pediment of the most beautiful style and the finest execution surmounts the edifice.

The golden tone of the masonry adds still more to the magnificence of this architecture, wholly antique or rather wholly Gallo-Roman. Those who built and decorated this arch of triumph were inspired by the monuments whose ruins strewed the soil of their country; but these monuments presented an especial character which was not Roman. Read these lines of Auguste Choisy in his *Histoire de l'Architecture:* "The Gallic school is not at all the school of Rome; instead of Roman solemnity,

it shows an elegance which we shall find again at the period of the Renaissance in the works of the descendants of the Gallo-Roman architects. . . . The tomb of Saint Rémy, however Roman it may be in details, resembles in its general form the free conception of a Pierre Lescot or a Philibert Delorme. . . . The order of the Maison Carrée of Nîmes is a true Renaissance colonnade." A very ingenious remark whose correctness becomes striking, when we consider the gate of La Tour d'Aigues, constructed in the sixteenth century by artists who, after such a lapse of time, had remained faithful to the taste of their ancestors. We may assert, without a paradox, that in Provence there has, properly speaking, never been a Renaissance. They did not return to the antique, for they had never departed from it. Gothic art had been imported hither, but had never become acclimated. From the primitive stonecutter who amuses himself by copying the column of Le Vernègues to the skilled builders of La Tour d'Aigues, the same tradition is perpetuated. . . .

We would like to be able to revive, in imagination, this great ruined château. But how little is known of its history! The ruins have been plundered and, except the architecture,

there is not a trace of its past. As to the chroniclers and the travelers of earlier days, they have here, as elsewhere, been miserly of the details which would now amuse our curiosity.

We know nothing of the feudal fortress, which belonged at first to the family of Sabran and then to that of d'Agoult. The donjon and the foundations of the two towers are the sole remnants of the original construction. But, in 1505, Jeanne d'Agoult marries René de Boulier, Marquis de Cental, Seigneur de Beaumont and Vicomte de Reillane; she brings him La Tour d'Aigues, and it was the marquises of Cental who, in the sixteenth century, created the residence whose remnants we see. A few lines of Pérussis, the historian of the religious wars in the Comtat, enumerate its magnificences: "La Tour d'Aigues, a strong place among those belonging to Monseigneur de Cental, where he has a superb, rich and strong château, provided with all requisite commodities and among others with a sumptuous and spacious tennis court, with beautiful pools, parks, gardens, warrens, prairies, dovecotes, mills, labyrinths, alleys, and a rare ground for pall mall, constructed with great artifice, all within sight of the château, with a beautiful and ample domain,

and some "*coustaultz*" in the likeness of those of Tuscany or Montferrat."

It is said that it was Jean Louis Nicolas de Cental who added the greatest embellishments to the paternal mansion. A legend whose origin is unknown says that he was amorous of Queen Margot, and that he built a veritable palace in the hope of a visit which he never received. The legend was tenacious of life, for when the house of Boulier had been extinct a hundred and fifty years, and the château had passed successively through the hands of the Comte de Sault, the Duc de Lesdiguières and the Maréchal de Villeroi, a traveler, visiting La Tour d'Aigues, recounted once more this melancholy tale of a fruitless passion.

This traveler was the Marquis Le Franc de Pompignan, a magistrate of Toulouse, who refreshed himself after his judicial labors by writing little "voyages," a mixture of prose and verse, in imitation of Chapelle and Bachaumont. He had just left the château of Mirabeau, where he had been received by the marquise, mother of the author of *L'Ami des Hommes,* and, on the way to Apt, passed La Tour d'Aigues, a "monument, it is said, of Love and Folly." And here is his gossip:

"But they (Love and Folly) had the good

sense to choose a skillful architect to build the house of La Tour. Others would give you a brilliant description of it. They would tell you of the esplanade which is before the principal gate; of the deep moats, lined with stone and full of living water, by which the château is surrounded; of a façade praised by connoisseurs; lastly, of a very beautiful square tower which rises above the two great main buildings and which we are assured was built by the Romans."

After making a few rhymes upon the trees and terraces of the garden, he continues:

"Let us leave these details to the painters of architecture or landscape, or the makers of romances. But perhaps you will not be disinclined to know who is responsible for giving this building to Provence, which is one of the curiosities of this province. It was the Baron de Cental. This gentleman had destined it to be the habitation of a princess whose adventures are not unknown.

"Now this baron of Cental
Was in love with a heroine
Who gave him many rivals;
Traveling as a pilgrim,
Sometimes richly, sometimes meanly,
A village girl or a city wench,
Carrying her hireling heart

From the court of Catherine
To some place less royal;
This lady of merit
Was Queen Marguerite,
Not that free-loving one
Who made a naughty collection
Of the tender love affairs
Of monks and little nuns;
But her niece of the blood,
Of whom our good King Henri
Was for more than a year
The very afflicted husband;
And who more than any other woman
Carried graven on her soul
The divine commandment
Of love for one's neighbor.

"We find in a thousand parts of the château the ciphers of the queen and the baron, accompanied by three Latin words which I am going to quote to you in the original to make a show of my learning: *Satiabor cum apparuerit.* If I dared to translate this Latin to you, you would admit, Madame, that it says much in a few words.

"In the end, the gentle princess
Never saw this beautiful place;
And the baron who tirelessly awaited her
Had the château for his trouble."

This is how, in 1740, a distinguished tourist wrote down his traveling impressions.

In the same year when Le Franc de Pom-

pignan visited La Tour d'Aigues and told its legend in verses of seven feet, the domain was sold by the Maréchal de Villeroi to Bruni, president of the parliament of Provence. A great traveler, well versed in natural science, the latter brought together in his château valuable collections of fossils and minerals, and created a menagerie of animals from abroad in his park. He was a gourmet, and it was he who made fashionable in Provence the practice of caponizing carp to render their flesh more delicate.

In 1782, the imprudence of a fire-tender caused a conflagration which destroyed the greater part of the buildings of La Tour d'Aigues. The natural history collection was saved, however. But in 1790 the château was sacked and destroyed by the Revolutionists.

The archaeologist Millin, who traveled in the south of France in 1807, describes the disaster begun by fire and completed by the Revolutionists. "My soul," he writes, "is still penetrated with grief, when I think of the horrible devastation of this beautiful place, consecrated by interesting memories and by great services rendered to humanity." He has before him the account of the travels of Le Franc de Pompignan, he copies the tale of the Baron de

Cental and Queen Margot. And he adds gravely:

"We are not forced to admit the authority of poets in history: it is not in the least likely that the Baron de Cental would have dared to conceive and proclaim such a chimerical hope. We know that Catherine de Médicis stayed in this château in 1579, when she traversed Provence to pacify its troubles; and we must presume that at this time the gallant owner caused the painting of the interlacing M's and C's, which have been the subject of an error which love of the marvelous has accepted and to which time has given authority. We read around this cipher: *Satiabor cum apparuerit* (I shall be satisfied when she shall appear). A nobleman might thus express himself in describing the desire which he had of receiving the visit of his sovereign; but a subject would never have dared to declare so publicly the love with which he burned for the wife of his king."

Perhaps these arguments are not irrefutable. With Queen Margot few hopes were chimerical, and the royal majesty would not in the least intimidate the subjects of King Henri. But compare this ingenious protest with the irreverent verses of Le Franc de Pompignan. The worthy Millin has before his eyes the most

MARGUERITE DE VALOIS.

lamentable spectacle which can be offered to the vision of an archaeologist, an admirable monument ravaged by the Jacobins. Before these ruins, he cannot think without scorn and indignation of the envoys and the great minds which prepared the work of destruction. Perhaps he goes a little far in his defence of the past; but his zeal is touching.

He groans over the annihilated collections, the destroyed works of art, the fountain basins which are beginning to fill up, the completely devastated park, and when he leaves La Tour d'Aigues, he carries away an almost tragic impression. "The brutal and ferocious air of our innkeeper," he says, "harmonized well enough with the frightful aspect of the ruins we had before our eyes. We could easily believe, in listening to him, that he and his family were among the brigands who carried fire and sword here. We left, with sad memories, this place which the magnificence and the noble beneficence of its masters could not save from the madness of these furies."

And here is the epilogue of this short chronicle of La Tour d'Aigues.

Shortly before the Revolution, the daughter of President de Bruni had married an officer of the royal marine, Amable de Paule de

Seytres, Marquis de Caumont. A few days after the marriage, the young couple separated. The marquise returned to her parents. The marquis later perished in a shipwreck. Madame de Caumont became an emigrée, returned to Aix and shut herself up in the magnificent hotel which her father possessed there. She lived alone there to a very advanced age, occupied in translating the Greek Anthology and in awaiting the coming of Louis XVII. After her death, the house was despoiled of the works of art which President de Bruni had collected there, and the last fragments of La Tour d'Aigues were scattered among the second-hand dealers.

This hotel at Aix is still standing. Its beautiful façade has been disfigured by sticking a branch post office on it. At least its vestibule with caryatides and its great staircase of honor have been respected until now.

As for the ruins of the château, the inhabitants of the village came there for a century to help themselves to building stone. The breaches were closed by iron fences to prevent this pillage. But the urchins climbed the fences and made the sculptures targets for stone throwing. Then it was decided to build a high wall sown with broken bottles. This enclosure

may be useful, but we cannot find that it harmonizes with the style of the Renaissance buildings. Then, on the terraces which were formerly covered with gardens, a public comfort station has been erected and painted red, so that if we go to the other bank of the Lèze to contemplate the immense edifice with its mutilated architecture outlined against the sky, the eye is inevitably held by this little garnet building. Here we recognize the taste and vigilance of our bureau of historic monuments.

May, 1911.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM AIX TO FONTAINE-L'ÉVÊQUE AND RIEZ

THE waters of the Durance, scattered into the canals of Carpentras, Les Alpines, Craponne and Marseilles, irrigate the most smiling fields of Provence. Upon the right bank, they traverse the Comtat, gratify Cavaillon with its perfumed melons, Pernes with its odorous strawberries, and clothe the meadows of Carpentras with an almost Norman verdure. Upon the other bank, they enrich the magnificent orchards of Saint Rémy; they give freshness and shade to the once baked surroundings of Marseilles, they plash in the elegant basins of the waterworks of Longchamps. Finally, the most important of the affluents of the Durance, the Verdon, fertilizes the surroundings of the city of Aix and remedies the inadequacies of the aqueducts built by the Romans in the colony of Sextius.

The Verdon flows into the Durance, but owes at least half of its own waters to a prodigiously abundant spring called Fontaine-l'Évêque.

This gushes forth some nine hundred meters from the edge of the stream, in the territory of Bauduen, in the arrondissement of Draguignan.

One day the department of Le Var purchased Fontaine-l'Évêque, and it expects to use for its own purposes the wealth which Le Vaucluse and Les Bouches-du-Rhône have made their own by means of enormous hydraulic works, the earliest of which date back to the sixteenth century. Thus a conflict appears inevitable between the people of Le Var and those who are called the "Avalians."

It is said that the quarrel is upon the point of breaking out. The General Council of Le Var has just accepted the plans of a company which intends to exploit the spring. Only the authorization of the State is lacking.

The other interested parties, the population of Le Vaucluse and Les Bouches-du-Rhône and the companies which own the existing canals, invoke the law which limits the right of the proprietor in such a case. It would seem inhuman to ruin a prosperous region and to annihilate the work accomplished by good workers. But the engineers who wish to capture the spring protest that, far from drying out the "Avalians," they will give them more and better water. In the Alps is a little lake, the lake of

Allos, which is six kilometers in circumference and fifty meters deep; it would only be necessary to make its bottom watertight to transform it into a reservoir, containing forty million cubic meters; the overflow will be turned into the Verdon and compensate it for the loss of the waters of Fontaine-l'Évêque, which will be henceforth appropriated to the irrigation of Le Var. The "Avalians" answer that this enterprise is chimerical, that the reservoir will never be made tight, and that if the spring of Fontaine-l'Évêque is once taken, the Verdon or the Durance will no longer suffice for the irrigation of Le Vaucluse and Les Bouches-du-Rhône.

Such are the arguments. Tempers are beginning to heat, and the pessimists even believe that this affair might very well bring about a sort of civil war in Provence, like that which recently agitated Champagne.

Curiosity to see the spring which caused this dispute took me to the neighborhood of Fontaine-l'Évêque. I have not regretted it. I had no opinion upon the engineers' plan; I have no more now. But I made an agreeable trip in Upper Provence.

Fontaine-l'Évêque is an original and charming spot. The face of the nymph was too

beautiful not to put in the heart of men the fire of envy and the fury of discord.

* *

As I came from Aix, I traversed the rolling country of that "Central Provence" which Monsieur Henri Brémond has so delightfully depicted at the beginning of his pleasant story of Père Yvan. "Certainly," he writes, "we deny neither the timbrel nor the locusts, but we desire that they should put also in our armorial bearings, in an honorable position, the slender and robust trunk, the grave foliage, of our olive trees. Austere and reserved, true Provence relegates to the extremities of its frontiers, as a doubtful adornment, the vain palm trees and the fields of roses, a fragile harvest of pleasure which she abandons to the invasion of northern men, and whose perfumes are enough for her. The firm lines of her hills, the icy wind which torments her and reanimates her without truce, her red and dried-up fields which must be constantly disputed with the living rock, preach to her neither trickery nor voluptuousness. Obstinately opposed to everything which might come to her from the other bank of the Rhône,

she assimilates without resistance her heavy neighbors of the Alps, whom an immemorial instinct draws to her and whose rough manners ally themselves willingly with the somewhat dry gravity of our Roman ancestors. . . . She is not melancholy, because everything vague displeases her, but she also is not careless and joyous. . . ."

I would not have been able to verify all the truth of these remarks, which seemed a little like confidences, in the course of a trip which was to be too brief, if the conversation of my companion, a Provençal full of good taste and knowledge had not, as we went along, explained to me the landscape, the people, and the customs. However, if we recall the Provence, addicted to the farandole, of the banks of the Rhône, and the Smyrniote Provence of the coast, we are quickly struck by the contrast here offered in pensive countenances, restrained gestures, quiet conversations, affable and brief sentences. The same vivacity of humor; but less emphasis, less noise, less rudeness and especially more nobility. Even the charm of nature makes itself felt in a less brusque and less imperious way. Nothing recalls the voluptuous grace of the Comtat. The hills do not show that marvelous purity of out-

IN OLD PROVENCE.

line which makes the Alpines one of the masterpieces of creation. Perhaps we cannot pierce all the harmony of form, all the subtleness of shading, at the first glance; the miracle is less sudden, the seductiveness more intimate.

The highway passes through pleasant hamlets. I content myself with copying as they stand the scribblings of my notebook.

Rians.—Alleys, flights of steps and arcades, a Saracen town. Two glories: Father Yvan who, in the seventeenth century, founded the Order of Sisters of Mercy, and Saint Bénezet, who built the bridge of Avignon. A little tower topped with a delightful iron campanile. A new church built by a virtuous ecclesiastic; a winner of the Prix de Rome would not have done worse.

Varages.—Placed upon a great rock pierced with little grottos in which nest a multitude of pigeons; it is the dovecote-village. A pretty little fountain, surmounted by a frightful French Republic. Superb sycamores, but clipped into burlesques. In the church, an altar decorated with faience bears witness to the devotion, but not to the taste of the pottery makers of Varages, who, however, formerly had a reputation equal to that of Moustiers.

Barjols.—"The Tivoli of Provence," says

Joanne, who might say much worse. A large hamlet, hung on the side of an abrupt slope and overlooking the coolest and most Virgilian of valleys. Water gushes and dashes through the streets. A little torrent leaps from the little mountain and falls in little cascades in the midst of rocks and greenery. There was great fighting in Barjols in the sixteenth century, and the hilly streets could tell tales of war and carnage. In the church, a magnificent twelfth-century bas-relief forms the foundation of a niche in which the relics are preserved. An exquisite Renaissance doorway, that of the Hôtel de Pontevès. The square of Barjols, sloping steeply, is one of the most pleasing squares of Provence; in the shade of a giant sycamore, the basins of a beautiful fountain have disappeared beneath thick and dripping mosses.

Aups.—Ruins of walls and fragments of convents. Everything has a rough and somewhat frightful aspect. We have left "Central Provence"; the Alps are near. Nevertheless, above the village, a hill adorned with a chapel half hidden by tall cypresses, with the grace of a Siennese landscape. A few steps from the last houses of Aups, I entered a garden belonging to a farm and there I saw a singular little colonnade whose columns are of wood and terra

cotta. A little balustrade surmounts the little colonnade, and imitations of statues painted on wooden panels complete this childish decoration. We guess that a worthy man has here endeavored to satisfy his respectable passion for antique architecture. He was called Abbé Jean, and that is all that I could find out. The overgrown garden, the fallen-down trellises, the flowering trees, lend a touching grace to the miserable structure.

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Beyond Aups an immense deserted plain, whipped by the mistral. Not a dwelling, not a human being in this solitude. In the distance rise the first snowy summits of the Alps. Then, after leagues of shrubs and stones, there suddenly opens the cleft of a deep gorge, at the bottom of which flows the torrent of the Verdon. A little higher, toward the east, the valley widens out. In the depth of an amphitheatre of dry and naked mountains appears a tiny oasis of verdure: it is Fontaine-l'Évêque.

The spring flows impetuously from the low, deep grotto, at the foot of a locust tree and a fig tree. Its waters boil and foam over a few rocks, divide into several tranquil and limpid canals, surround a verdant isle where the trees

are entwined with ivy and wild vines, and flee to the Verdon, across the meadows—an idyllic landscape which a freak of nature has composed in the midst of the most mournful and desolate of all possible situations. And it is this contrast which produces the mystery and the grace of the beautiful spring.

In the neighborhood of the fountain, there remains nothing more than a mill and a miller's home; but scattered ruins here and there show that these sites were once inhabited. Not a trace of the Roman *pagus* of Sorps which stood at this spot, on the highway which connected Fréjus and Riez and crossed the Verdon near this spot upon a bridge whose abutments are not yet destroyed. We still see the ruins of a church on a hillock which overlooks the spring; an old gateway rises in the meadow, and two stone bridgelets give access to the island; coats of arms may still be seen on the walls of the miller's house.

Listen to the history of Sorps; it did not take the name of Fontaine-l'Évêque until the seventeenth century.

The ruined church is that of a monastery which Foulque de Reille, bishop of Riez, built in the thirteenth century to shelter a hundred nuns under the protection of Sainte Catherine.

The same Foulque installed at Sorps canons regular submissive to the rule of Saint Augustine, charged with the oversight of the nuns, and also opened a hospice for the pilgrims who followed the ancient Roman road on their way to Saint James of Compostello.

The monastery of Sainte Catherine of Sorps was soon one of the most prosperous of Provence. It was in the church of this convent that Saint Elzéar de Sabran saw for the first time Sainte Delphine de Signe. Historians of Provence find it singular that the memory of this meeting does not move the visitors to Fontaine-l'Évêque, while one cannot visit the Fontaine de Vaucluse without being possessed and even importuned by the memory of Laura and Petrarch. This seems to me, in the case of these historians, imprudent—they would be the first to complain if postal cards were consecrated to the memory of Saint Elzéar de Sabran and his virtuous wife—and simple, for frivolous posterity occupies itself only with those who have thought of posterity, which Petrarch did, and with what success!—but which Saint Elzéar de Sabran neglected.

In the fifteenth century, diseases, wars, floods of the Verdon ruined the monastery. The abbey was suppressed, the canons departed

and there remained at Sorps only a simple refuge for travelers.

In 1631, Louis Doni d'Attichy, descendant of a Florentine family long established in France, son of a councillor of the king and a sister of Maréchal de Marcillac, became bishop of Riez at the age of thirty. This gentleman restored his episcopal palace, enlarged his church, but dissatisfied his flock by his zeal in reprimanding scandals, so much so that he was obliged to leave Riez and accept the see of Autun. This is almost all that is known of his episcopate. But we know also that Doni was timid, and that "the town was a prison to him, solitude a Paradise"; this is why he had the idea of constructing a country house at Sorps, in order to flee from his flock.

One of the canons of Riez, Simon Bartel, who wrote a history of the bishops of Riez at that period (Note 23), and who appears to have been a sincere admirer of his bishop, published a description of this charming residence, of which there remain today only a portal and two little bridges. Bartel described this at length, in an idiomatic Latin; I am obliged, alas, to abridge it and translate it!

The house had been commenced in 1632, and was barely finished in 1636. It was already one

of the most agreeable châteaux of Provence, if one considered its bridges, its canals, some excavated in the rock and others in the earth, its fine walks which followed brooks shining like silver, or undulated through shady groves, its limpid pools, the beautiful decorations of the villa where the murmur of melodious waters sounded incessantly.

The house was surrounded with ponds into which had been introduced very delicate trouts which were equal to salmon in color and flavor.

It was very small, but it contained lodging sufficient for the bishop, his family and his guests. All its rooms were ornamented with plaster casts executed by an artist so skilled that you would have taken him for Phidias or Praxiteles.

All the nightingales of the countryside met of evenings in this garden. They brought sleep to even those who did not wish to sleep, for they calmed and soothed the mind by the suave modulations of their concerts; but on the other hand they prevented sleep for those who desired it, because they twittered so much, in company with all the other singing birds who came from different countries.

The surroundings of the château were nothing but flowery gardens and verdant prairies.

From the window one had before his eyes the valley, the woods and the river. But of all the charms of this residence the rarest was the spring itself, the spring of transparent waters, shining as a mirror, cool in summer, warm in winter, and so healthy that it was possible to drink them fresh from the spring, even if one was accustomed to use "boiled water."

The climate was the best in the world. The bishop knew well that he worked less for himself than for others and for eternity; he therefore experimented at first as to the merits of Sorps as a place of residence and observed that winds blew about the house from all quarters, and that, as if in an arena, they there delivered themselves to all sorts of skirmishes and combats. Many of the associates of Monseigneur Doni d'Attichy were there cured of melancholy, and others recovered their appetites.

Evidently malevolent minds had spread abroad evil reports as to the salubrity of the place, for Bartel insists upon this. "If it has happened that any one has fallen ill at the château of the bishop, he had no doubt caught it elsewhere, for there is no climate which can cure a fever when the body is already infected." Others complained of the humidity of this low-lying location. "Doubtless," replied

our canon, "there were mists in the valley of the Verdon; but Riez was also in a valley, and the very people who praised the air of the town alleged that that of Fontaine-l'Évêque was detestable." Now at Riez the soil was so dry that it could not absorb manure, and this produced very good wine but caused much sickness.

Doni d'Attichy had himself composed a fine Latin inscription in honor of his house and his fountain, and caused it to be cut upon a slab of marble.

He meditated the restoration of the monastery of Sainte Catherine, but had not the time for this.

The successors of Doni d'Attichy had no zeal for the upkeep of the villa of Fontaine-l'Évêque. One day a flood of the Verdon broke the dikes constructed to protect the domain; the river dashed against the very rocks whence the source flows, and everything was carried away. Thus perished the plaster casts equal to Phidias and Praxiteles.

The bishop regretted that God had not permitted him to utilize the spring which, he said, "would be able to irrigate the whole province." The engineers and the financiers, who wish to exploit this fountain today, have no idea

that they are simply reviving the idea of Monseigneur Doni d'Attichy.

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When the bishop, having said farewell to his trees, his nightingales and his trouts, returned to his episcopal town, he crossed the Verdon by a ford, not far from the ruins of the old bridge, and, having in passing blessed his diocesans at Sainte Croix, returned to Riez through the mountains, following the Roman way.

I followed a less direct route to get to Riez, and this detour took me first to Moustiers Sainte Marie.

Collectors of faience are moved by the mere name of Moustiers; but they may dispense with the pilgrimage hither: except for two very beautiful vases placed upon the high altar of the chapel of Notre Dame de Beauvoir, there is nothing here to recall the charming art of the eighteenth-century potters. If, however, the mania for collecting antiques has not rendered them insensitive to the beauty of a landscape, they may come here. They will see the most original and most picturesque spot in Upper Provence.

The torrent of Rioul has opened, through an immense wall of rocks, a profound crevice by which it leaps in a series of cascades from the summit of the mountain to the bottom of the valley. At the lowest level are moist meadows and orchards filled with flowers; higher, terraces of olives; still higher, built on the two sides of the ravine, the town, whose roofs of grey tiles are overlooked by a square bell tower, of rude and almost barbaric aspect, and yet of the most delicate elegance, because of the correctness of its proportions. Ancient arches of stone thrown across the bed of the Rioul carry the road from one bank to the other, and this then climbs the abrupt slope by a series of loops and reaches a little terrace far above the valley. Here is a group of admirable cypresses before the porch of a Romanesque chapel. High in the air above it, a five-pointed star is suspended from a chain which joins the two great rocks which dominate the gorge.

A hundred tales have been told of the origin of this mysterious chain. According to the most popular tradition, it was placed here by a certain Blacas who had made this vow, while he was held in captivity by the Mohammedans. This tradition has become permanent since Mistral used this subject for one of his most

beautiful "romances," whose refrain is the vow of Blacas:

"At Thy feet, Mary Virgin—I will suspend my chain—if ever I return—to Moustiers, in my own country."

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My first thought at Riez is to visit the cathedral and the palace of Monseigneur Doni d'Attichy. The cathedral is a monument of the most vivid insignificance. As to the palace, this enormous and characterless building has now become the municipal offices. The Corso of today, it is said, was one of the former avenues to the episcopal house. In short, the remnants of the little bishopric which was suppressed during the Revolution are of very moderate interest.

The melancholy archaeologist Millin, whose impressions of La Tour d'Aigues I have quoted, writes of Riez: "This town is one of the blackest, the saddest, and the most uninteresting in Provence, but it is interesting to a traveler because of its beautiful antique remains." Millin exaggerates. The position of Riez is agreeable, at the base of the hill, at the junction of two streams—the Colostre and the Auvestre. Hence, on a pleasant day in April, it is

ROMAN RUINS AT RIEZ.

not the most uninteresting town in Provence.

As to antiquities, Millin naturally concerns himself only with the Romans. He passed without stopping, if he even passed, before the pleasing façades of the fifteenth century which decorate the Rue Droite, or at least the street which is thus called, for the bishops of Riez never insisted that the houses of their capital should be built on exactly straight lines. A few doorways present delicate carvings. That which belongs to the most beautiful house in the town has on one of its leaves the portrait of the lord who inhabited it, and, on one side, this motto: *Everybody come in.* The antiquaries have lost themselves in conjectures about this. The most virtuous among them have agreed that this house served as an asylum for repentant ladies. Repentant? . . .

Two fine Roman monuments interest and excite the archaeologists. In the first place four columns of Esterel granite stand in the midst of an open field; their Corinthian capitals support an entablature with ornaments which differ in each of the intercolumnal spaces. To what monument did they belong? The most likely hypothesis, it seems, is that they were part of the colonnade of an amphitheatre. . . . Perhaps.

A little beyond stands a tiny edifice which is called the Pantheon. Actually, it is a Christian baptistry in which eight beautiful antique columns have been utilized. They are placed in a circle within a rotunda and support an octagonal dome. A baptismal font, dating from the first centuries of the Christian era, has been discovered underground and leaves no doubt as to the purpose of the monument.

Unfortunately, the restorers have so thoroughly scraped the venerable stones that they look as if they had been erected yesterday. Can they not at least be prevented from modernizing this baptistry still more by covering the walls with inscriptions? When Josephine Bon declares her love for "her" Fernand, it is Josephine's right, and so much the better for Fernand. But there are other walls in Riez which might receive this type of confidence. The most astonishing thing is that the gate of the baptistry is locked, that the key is in the mayor's office, and that I had to remain outside the enclosure, because the aforesaid key could not be found. I have got over my grief; only why did they let Josephine do it?

May 2, 1911.

CHAPTER XIV

DIGNE—MONSEIGNEUR MYRIEL AND MONSEIGNEUR DE MIOLLIS

THERE is nothing as fastidious as a little town which has been promoted to the rank of a prefecture, for it has paid dearly for its administrative importance. The modern buildings which are indispensable for the chief place of a French department, public offices, homes of functionaries and officers, colleges for girls and boys, clutter up the poor little city and abolish whatever charm it might have retained from the past.

Digne, which cannot muster eight thousand inhabitants, is the capital of the Basses-Alpes, and this does not beautify it. However, fate has been somewhat less cruel to it than to some of the prefectures in France. The architects, doubtless, have not spared it; they have enriched it with a high school, barracks, a hospital, a museum, etc. . . ; but they have not succeeded in depriving it of all its grace or of all its character. They have only half dis-

figured the beautiful location on which the hilly town stands at the foot of the Alps, between three torrents.

The towns of the south, in any case, offer a stronger resistance than those of the north to the ravages of progress. In both, men show themselves to be careless of the past and foolishly proud of novelty; but the natural laziness of the Southerners tempers their swelled heads. They build willingly, as is done elsewhere, but they do not take the pains to tear down. This is why Digne is divided into two towns, the new town which is ill-favored, and the old town whose streets are winding and charming.

Even in a century it is not possible to destroy a city of Provence. And here we are in the heart of ancient Provence. To be convinced of it, you have only to climb the cool and picturesque alleys of the old quarter, at the top of which stands the cathedral (a cathedral of the fifteenth century which fools of the nineteenth have ornamented with a thirteenth-century façade); you have only to salute, on entering the town, the beautiful Doric fountain whose basins are hidden beneath mosses; you have only to consider the admirable church of Notre Dame du Bourg, whose naked exterior, severe

architecture, square masses, offer a magnificent example of Provençal Romanesque, and especially to listen to the words which are exchanged under the shade trees of the Corso, on the terraces in front of the ice-cream cafés.

That the Provençals of the Basses-Alpes are worthy and true Provençals, fortune happily proved to me.

When I arrived at Digne, in the evening, I found the town in a tumult. The innkeeper, excusing himself for having to give me a poor room, told me that he was obliged, against his will, to shelter a whole company of bull fighters who had participated in a bull fight during the afternoon. "They are obliged," he said, "to remain here over tomorrow. One of the bulls leaped over the barrier, wounded a photographer, and escaped to the open fields. They are hunting for him." I was sorry for the misfortune of the photographer, made shift to be satisfied with the room left me by the toreadors, and, the next day, had forgotten all about the incident of the escaped bull, when, seated before a café in the Corso Gassendi, I saw a score of loafers grouped about a peasant who was telling a story at the table next to mine.

This man, burnt black by the sun and with long black mustaches, as thin as a cricket and

as noble as a Tartarin, but Tartarin without his boasts, was quietly telling the story of his deeds. He had hunted for the bull all night; he had discovered him at daybreak; the beast had charged him; to escape he had been obliged to climb a tree; then, astride one of the branches, he had quickly unrolled a long rope and, with a single swing of his lasso, he had captured his enemy. It is impossible to reproduce the color and accent of this tale. The loafers departed; others came to replace them, and the peasant retold his story; this time the drama became more pungent; the horn had touched his right side. Then a new group of auditors presented themselves and things became more tragic: the man had been gored on both flanks. The most admirable thing was the half-ironic air preserved by the story-teller and his auditors. The first would not have allowed any one to contradict him, the latter would not, for anything in the world, have shown their incredulity; one might say that each was taking amusement in fooling the other; it was exquisite. The peasant went toward the railway station to return to his village. As I traveled on the same train, I beheld that, at each station, he bent out of the window to inform the people of his perilous deed. At

Malijai, he left the train. The curate and the gendarmes, already forewarned by public rumor, awaited the hero in the hope of a "good story." The hero rose to the occasion . . . and the train departed.

* *

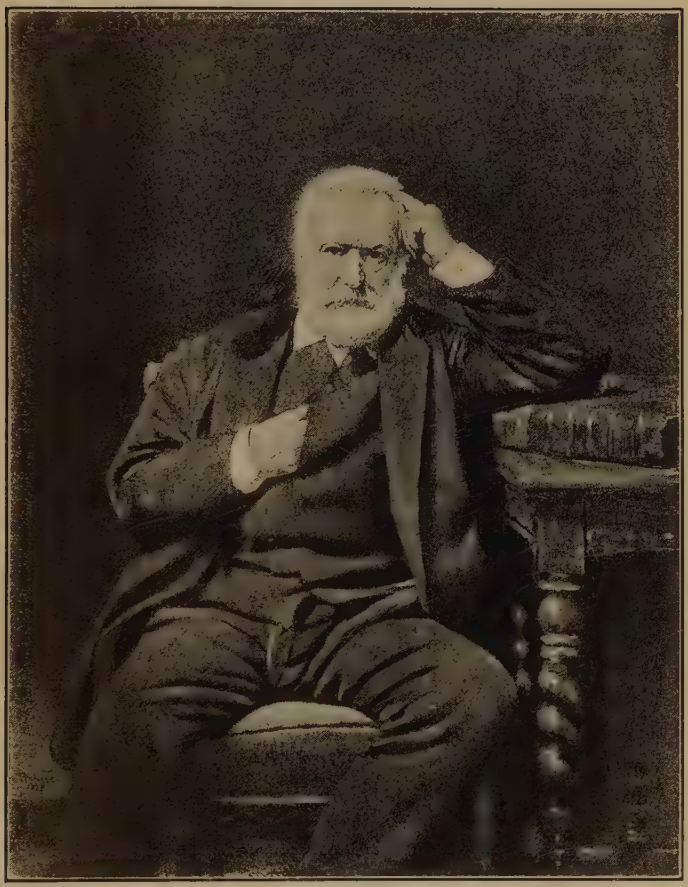
It is not possible to walk through the streets of Digne without being haunted by the memory of Bishop Myriel and Jean Valjean. Victor Hugo placed here the events related in the first two books of *Fantine,* that is, the most moving part of *Les Misérables.* Among all the monstrous and terrible characters which the poet invented, the bishop and the criminal have the soul and countenance of human beings. They are not the two faces of an antithesis, and their mission is not to translate the verbose reveries of Victor Hugo. They live; we see them, we hear them. We know also that Monseigneur Myriel is not an imaginary person and that he was drawn from a bishop of Digne, famous for his charity and piety, Monseigneur de Miollis. So it is tempting to investigate on the spot how Victor Hugo found the true elements of his romance and how he transformed them.

He himself preserved silence, he said nothing

which might guide us in this investigation. I am therefore reduced to conjectures, and I am not sure that they are correct. My only object is to direct attention to a point of literary history which has remained obscure until now.

First remark: we do not know very precisely when the first chapters of *Les Misérables* were written. The complete romance appeared in 1862 in ten volumes; but, when Victor Hugo made his arrangements with the Belgian publishers Lacroix, Verbokoven et Cie, the latter had to purchase from Eugène Renduel the rights to the first two volumes. Renduel had long before agreed to publish them under the title: *Le Manuscrit de l'Évêque.* As he had given up publishing in 1840, it follows that the first part of *Les Misérables,* if not written in its final form, was at least conceived before 1840 (Note 24). We know no more than this, but this simple detail is not without importance.

Let us return to Digne. Jean Valjean arrives in the town worn out and famished; he wanders through the streets seeking shelter, and all the doors, even those of the bishop, remain closed to him. I have followed the route indicated in the romance. The topography of Victor Hugo is rigorously exact. As to the home of the bishop, the



VICTOR HUGO.

house which was inhabited by Monseigneur de Miollis, according to Canon Bondil, his contemporary and eulogist, does not correspond to that which Victor Hugo described; but I was told that before the Revolution the bishops of Digne dwelt in another house near the old hospital, and that Victor Hugo manifestly meant these buildings, since he described Monseigneur Myriel as giving his house to the sick and going to dwell in the hospital. It is only necessary to examine the places to perceive that the romancer described them faithfully.

Did Victor Hugo then come to Digne? It is quite probable. However, although I have gone through what has been given to us of his correspondence and his descriptions of travel, I have found there no mention of his passing through this part of Provence. But do we know all of the flights of Victor Hugo between 1830 and 1840? At Digne itself, a tradition is preserved, according to which the precise information which the author used in *Les Misérables* was furnished to him either at Brussels or at Guernsey by political refugees. It is well-known, as a matter of fact, that there were many political exiles from the Basses-Alpes after the *Coup d'État*. This

hypothesis is not improbable, for the original text of the *Manuscrit de l'Évêque* was certainly rewritten, as we will see presently.

In any case, it is not of much importance to know where Hugo found these details of local color; it is more interesting to discover whence he obtained the idea of drawing, under the name of Monseigneur Myriel, his more or less faithful portrait of Monseigneur de Miollis.

We have formal testimony on this point. A few days after the appearance of *Les Misérables,* Monsieur François de Miollis, nephew of the old bishop of Digne, addressed a letter (Note 25) to the editor-in-chief of *L'Union,* in which he defended the memory of his uncle against certain assertions of Victor Hugo. He proved that no one could have any doubt as to the identity of Monseigneur de Miollis with Monseigneur Myriel. "In the first place," he wrote, "the first names of the bishop of the romance and the actual bishop are identical; in the second place, Monsieur Hugo says that his Bishop Myriel was son of a councillor of the Parliament of Provence, that he had been made curate of Brignoles in 1804, bishop of Digne in 1806, that he was also known under the popular name of *Bienvenu,* that he had two brothers, one a lieutenant-general, the other a

prefect, a worthy and dignified gentleman, who lived in retirement at Paris, in the Rue Cassette. All these details correspond in the most exact manner with my venerated uncle. *This prefect, of whom Monsieur Hugo speaks, was my father, who actually had an apartment in the Rue Cassette, where Monsieur Victor Hugo visited him from time to time.*"

It is therefore in these conversations with the brother of Monseigneur de Miollis that Victor Hugo obtained the idea and the details of the first book of *Fantine,* and these conversations must have been a little longer and a little more frequent than Monsieur François de Miollis believed, for it is manifest that the romancer knew his model admirably. At certain points, the resemblance is perfect. Otherwise the picture is unfaithful, cruelly unfaithful. That we may judge this properly, let us compare the portrait with the original.

Charles François Bienvenu Myriel, of a parliamentary family of Aix, had been married at eighteen or twenty; there had been a great deal of gossip about him, and "all the first portion of his life had been given to the world and to gallantry." At the time of the Revolution, he had emigrated; then, as his wife had died, he became a priest in Italy. At first curate at

Brignoles, he was named to the bishopric of Digne by Napoleon. Then he gave his palace to the poor, tried by all means to reduce the expense of his table, his clothing and his carriage, scandalized the wealthy by his evangelical manners, made himself adored by the people because of the simplicity of his preaching, lived the life of a saint and an apostle in his poor house, served by his sister, Mademoiselle Baptistine, and his servant, Madame Magloire. "Prayer, the celebration of the religious offices, charity, consolation to the afflicted, the cultivation of a bit of land, fraternity, frugality, hospitality, renunciation, confession, study, labor filled each of the days of his life." He died in 1821.

Charles François Bienvenu de Miollis is less well-known than Charles François Bienvenu Myriel. His biography was written a score of years ago by Monseigneur Ricard, honorary vicar-general of Monseigneur the Archbishop of Aix. This work, confused and diffuse, is in addition written in an illegible sacristy jargon. Happily for the memory of Monseigneur de Miollis, the task was later reattempted by the Comtesse d'Estienne d'Orves, who produced a simple, sober and moving story of the life of this "bishop of the Alps."

MGR. DE MIOLLIS, BISHOP OF DIGNE.

The true Miollis was the third son of Joseph Laurent de Miollis and of Delphine Thérèse de Foscolombes. He was born in Aix in 1753. From his infancy he was remarkable for a religious fervor which caused him to be compared to Saint Louis of Gonzaga. Having become doctor of theology "at the holy university of Aix," he is ordained priest at twenty-four; for some time vicar at Brignoles, he soon returns to Aix and catechizes the people of the countryside. In 1791, he refuses to take the oath, flees to Marseilles in disguise, then takes refuge at Nice and finally reaches Rome. He remains in Italy until 1801, and confides his *Observations sur Rome ancienne et moderne* to eleven volumes of manuscript. After returning to France, he again begins to catechize the people of Provence. He becomes curate of Brignoles and, a year later, bishop of Digne; his brother General de Miollis, who displeased Napoleon by the rigor of his republican principles, has just returned to favor. He administers his diocese for thirty-two years. His holiness, his asceticism, his charity, the naïve good fellowship of his language, are the admiration of his clergy and his flock. Montalembert, passing through Digne in 1831, writes in his diary: "I will never forget this

venerable old man, dressed in a serge soutane, in his humble and modest palace, speaking with as much energy as simplicity, a true type of prelate of the early days. . . . It is with true faith that I knelt before him, asking his blessing; I preserve an affectionate and eternal memory of him." Until he had passed eighty, Monseigneur de Miollis continues his pastoral journeys over the rough roads of his mountain diocese. Only when he is eighty-five years old, can he make up his mind to resign. He retires to Aix, where he dies in 1843.

It is easy to see what was the part of romantic invention in Hugo's work. For the necessity of his story the author makes Monseigneur Myriel die in 1821; it is necessary that at that date Jean Valjean, having become Monsieur Madeleine, should assume mourning for the bishop who regenerated him. It is less easy to understand why Victor Hugo ascribed to this holy personage a frivolous youth, "given to the world and to gallantry." This travesty of the truth must have aroused the indignation of the family of Monseigneur de Miollis. The ordinary reader will less willingly take this side. There is a question here only of historic truth, which is of little importance in a novel. Moral truth is the only one for which we care

in such an affair, and it is the only one, in addition, which the writer has promised us. Hugo himself says in the second chapter of his book: "We do not pretend that the portrait which we draw here is truthful; it satisfies us to say that it has a resemblance." Was the promise kept?

Yes, except in a chapter which unfortunately is enough to disfigure and falsify all this part of the work. It is entitled: "The Bishop in the Presence of an Unknown Light." This light is that of '93, evoked and glorified by a dying member of the convention. Monseigneur Myriel is so greatly dazzled by it that he ends by falling at the knees of the old Jacobin and asks his blessing. It was assuredly not Monsieur de Miollis, former prefect of Finistère who, in his apartment in the Rue Cassette, related this extravagant scene to Victor Hugo. The romancer drew this entirely from his imagination, and the portrait certainly turned into caricature. It is impossible not to ask whence came such a serious incoherence.

The unpitying Biré has answered this question in a way which seems to explain everything: Victor Hugo had drawn in the *Manuscrit de l'Évêque* a preliminary portrait of Monseigneur Myriel; he did not desire that this

work should be lost and he turned it into the prologue of *Les Misérables;* but, as his opinions had changed in twenty years, he retouched the text and gave a *lay passport* to his bishop. Can one not celebrate without scruple the holiness and the charity of the man of the church, if he has been humiliated before the Revolutionary, once for all (Note 26)?

To turn this conjecture into probability, read *Les Misérables* attentively! This romance is full of hors-d'oeuvre artificially attached to the principal subject, which are without any doubt fragments of abandoned books (*Waterloo, les Mines et les Mineurs, Notices sur les Égouts de Paris,* etc. . . .). Does not one often see discrepancies in the way of describing or relating? Let us confine ourselves to the early chapters. In the midst of those robust and concise pages which belong to the best Hugo—the Hugo of the years before 1840—we discover some of those interminable and exasperating tirades in which the writer allows himself the diversion of his virtuosity, juggling with maxims, antitheses and plays on words, varying in short, sybilline, and innumerable phrases a theme of the most stupefying banality. This, for example: "Be it said in passing, it is a thing as hideous as success. Its false resem-

blance to merit deceives men. For the crowd, success has almost the same profile as supremacy. Success, that curse of talent, has a dupe, history. Juvenal and Tacitus alone do not fall under its spell. In our days, an almost official philosophy has made its home with it, wears the livery of success and waits in its antechamber. Succeed: theory. Prosperity presumes capacity. Win in the lottery, you are a successful man. Whoever triumphs is venerated. Be born with a silver spoon in your mouth, that is everything. You have luck, you will have the rest; be happy, people will believe you to be great. . . . Gilding is gold. To be the first comer is no harm, provided that you are successful, etc. . . ., etc. . . ., etc. . . ." This continues for forty lines, and does not last longer because the juggler's fancy is otherwise. It would be impossible to make any one believe that these silly sparklings which are such a cruel contrast to the admirable picture of the episcopal house and the admirable letters of Mademoiselle Baptistine, were not "crowded in" at this place, twenty years later, simply to lengthen the manuscript.

Here we have wandered some way from Monseigneur de Miollis and farther still from Digne; but I have just reread *Les Misérables,*

and I wanted to mention here some of the impressions which this reading left on me. I have recently seen with surprise that some of my contemporaries, questioned as to what was the best French romance, had designated *Les Misérables*. Considering only the form, this can be sustained as a matter of argument. But it is difficult to consider as a masterpiece a book composed of shreds and patches, made up of this and that, without unity of thought, or even of style.

June 16, 1911.

NOTES

Note 1. *"Avignon et le Comtat Venaissin,"* published by Laurens in the *"Collection des Villes d'Art."*

Note 2. According to all her biographers, Madame de Sévigné died of the smallpox. This error has been refuted in a very interesting essay by E. Lemire (*A propos du deuxième centenaire de Mme. de Sévigné.—Sa dernière maladie.—Sa mort.—Sa sepulture,* par E. Lemire, 1896). This author has established with complete certainty that Madame de Sévigné died of a *chronic fever.* This detail may appear insignificant. But it has a certain importance in the eyes of those who care for the good name of Madame de Grignan. As a matter of fact, the daughter was living in the château where her mother died and was not present at her death bed. Until recently this strange conduct had been attributed to terror inspired by the contagiousness of smallpox. . . . So we see that Madame de Grignan is freed from the charge of cowardice. If she was not at the bedside of her dying mother, it was only because of her own extreme debility: she was herself seriously ill.

The same work contains valuable information in regard to the violation of the tomb of Madame de Sévigné in 1793.

Note 3. Since this was written, new plans have been made which are a little less destructive of the beauty of the site.

Note 4. Reference may be made for details in regard to Chastel to an interesting essay by Monsieur Honoré Gilbert, curator of the museum of Aix.

Note 5. *Un grand seigneur au XVIIIe siècle: le comte de Valbelle.—Le Mausolée du comte de Valbelle.—Pierre Mignard en Provence.—Les Dames de Valbelle.*

Note 6. I have consulted, in regard to Valbelle and the Château de Tourves, in addition to the works by Monsieur Octave Teissier which have been already mentioned, the following: *Mlle. Clairon,* by Edmund de Goncourt; the *Mémoires d'Hippolyte Clairon;* the *Essai sur l'Histoire de la Provence. suivi d'une notice des Provençaux célèbres,* by Bouche; *J. P. Chastel, sculpteur provençal,* by Honoré Gilbert; *Les Rues d'Aix,* by Roux-Alphéran.

Note 7. This letter was published by Edmund de Goncourt in his essay upon Mademoiselle Clairon, but he appears to accept in other details the mendacious story of the Mémoires.

Note 8. The *pan* (an abbreviation of *empan*) was a measure used in the south of France; it was equal to twenty-four centimeters or about nine inches.

Note 9. In regard to Monseigneur de Miollis, consult Chapter XIV.

Note 10. This correspondence of Commandant Lagorsse with the Duke of Rovigo in relation to the travels of the Pope was published for the first time in the interesting essay of Monsieur Geoffroy de Grandmaison: *Napoléon et les cardinaux noirs.*

Note 11. Monsieur Cavalier was curate of the cathedral of Fréjus at the time of the Revolution. He was intrusted with the administration of the diocese during the episcopate of Bishop Rigouard, who finally became curate of Draguignan.

Note 12. *Archives nationales,* F. 76.533.

Note 13. *Essai historique sur la ville de Brignoles,* from notes of Monsieur E. Lebrun (this work, of which only 200 copies were printed, was not published).—*Bibliothéque Méjanes,* Ms 345. Ms 352 (Bag 6). (In this last collection, I found especial profit in an anonymous manuscript relating to Monsieur d'Authier and the reform of La Celle. A passage in this memoir proves sufficiently that it is the work of a Benedictine nun, daughter of Sauvaire, advocate of the court of Aix.)

Note 14. *Notice sur Le Thoronet,* by Abbé Binard.

Note 15. *Statistique du départment du Var,* by Noyon.

Note 16. I wrote this several years ago; events have justified all my apprehensions.

Note 17. *L'abbaye de Lérins,* by Henri Moris.

Note 18. *Revue des études historiques* (May-August 1907), with introduction and notes by Monsieur L. G. Pélissier.

Note 19. They have been, but now they are once more in France.

Note 20. Pierre de Nolhac, *A propos des Fragonard de Grasse;* in the number for January, 1907, of the review: *Musées et monuments de France.*

Note 21. Madame de Contes de Bucamps, to whom this painting belongs, has done me the kindness to write as follows:

"I obtained this portrait directly from Madame Fragonard. (Here is meant the wife of Théophile Fragonard, son of Alexandre Évariste Fragonard and grandson of Jean Honoré Fragonard, the illustrious Frago.) I speak only from memory of the signature whose archaic appearance is thoroughly eighteenth century in appearance. But I base my conclusions upon an extract from a letter which I possess and which was written by the same Dame Fragonard of which I have spoken. She addressed it to the person through whom I purchased the picture. This is the extract which you may judge for yourself: 'I am, as I have always told you, disposed to be agreeable and useful to you in every way; so, I can very safely put my name to what I have seen and heard said before me (since I was not there), that is that the portrait which I have sold you is that of Monsieur de Lamartine, at the age of twelve or thirteen years, painted by Fragonard, who died in 1806. As I knew neither the father of my husband, who died in 1850, nor his grandfather, of whom I have just spoken, I can say only one thing, and that is that this portrait never left the family and that it came to my son on the death of my mother-in-law, which happened in 1876. Is this what you desire?'

"As we did not have any doubt as to the good faith of Madame Fragonard, we bought this painting, which has always been a sweet satisfaction to us."

I agree that these facts give much probability to the attribution. But what difference does it make who painted this little picture? It cannot be denied that it is charming and that it does represent Lamartine as a child.

Note 22. In regard to the episcopate of Godeau, I have consulted the works of Monsieur Georges Doublet: *Les Mandements de Godeau; les Visites pastorales de Godeau; l'ancienne cathédrale de Vence.*

Note 23. *Historica et chronologica præsulum sanctæ Regiensis ecclesiæ nomenclatura. Authore D. Simone Bartel, presbytero regiensi theologo.—Acquis Sextiis, etc. . . MDCXXVI.*

Note 24. These details are taken from a very interesting essay by Monsieur Adolphe Julien: *Le Romantisme et l'éditeur Renduel.*

Note 25. Quoted by Biré in *Victor Hugo après 1852.*

Note 26. Monsieur René Dumesnil, author of a very interesting study upon the sources of two volumes of *Les Misérables: L'Idylle rue Plumet* and *l'Epopée de la rue Saint-Denis,* had the great courtesy to indicate to me that I would find in the manuscripts of Victor Hugo possessed by the Bibliothèque Nationale, and especially in a collection of notes and memoranda relative to *Les Misérables* (No. 26 *bis*), justification for the hypothesis of Biré, to wit, that the portrait of Monseigneur Myriel, written previous to 1840, was later retouched by the author.

I have seen the manuscripts; they can leave no doubt.

In the first place, I found there some interesting details as to the history of the work: the book was named in the first place *Les Vagabonds,* then *Les Misères,* and finally *Les Misérables.* Jean Valjean was named successively Jean Tréjean and Jean Vlajean. Finally, the work was commenced before 1848, for the cover of one of the portfolios of notes formed by Victor Hugo bears this notation: "This contains the complete manuscript of *Les Misérables* up to this day, August 31, 1851, when I am getting ready to

resume it after two years and three months of interruption because of the Revolution."

In regard to the first two books whose scenes are laid at Digne, I had asked myself if Victor Hugo had visited this town and had himself drawn up the topography of his story. The manuscripts do not answer the question in an absolutely certain way. However, among the memoranda, I found a plan of Digne in the hand of Victor Hugo; it was traced in pencil and redrawn in ink. On it are indicated the buildings and the streets which are mentioned in the story.

As to the portrait of the bishop, the first page of the manuscript carries this note: "First text, later augmented, placed as annex to the manuscript." Everything that the discrepancies of thought and style had revealed to us is confirmed by the difference of paper and variations of the handwriting. The retouching and additions made after the first draft are exactly those which we have guessed. The pity of the bishop for insects, his astonishing philosophic conversation with a senator, his interview with the dying member of the convention, were all added to the *Manuscrit de l'Évêque,* that is to say to the romance which Victor Hugo had promised and sold to the publisher Renduel between 1830 and 1840.

I leave to others the care of dating these different modifications in a precise manner. The manuscripts of *Les Misérables* will have to be attentively studied, if there ever arises a patient critic to write the history, which in any case would be superfluous, of the philosophic variations of Victor Hugo.

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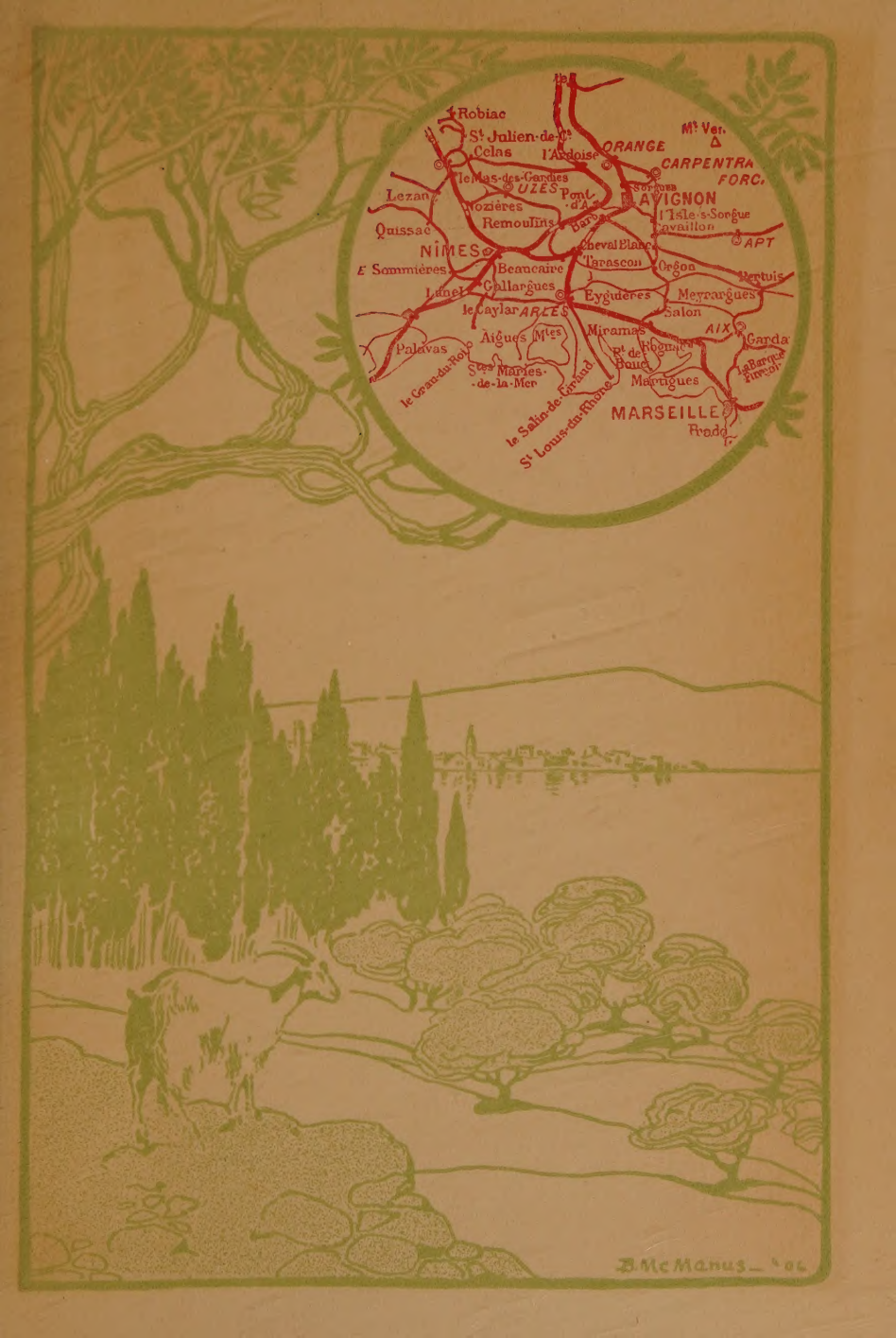
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